

The Mermaid in the Swimming Pool

By fleshlight and tileglow,
In a wishwashed terrain
Of civilized waves,
She swims through my brain.

With the flick of her smile
And the flail of her frown,
She wakes wet echoes
Where coral scruples drown

And I hear her calling music
From the harps of her hair
Vibrate through the depths
Of gillshaken air

And the song combs my blood
On the sands of my wrist
And clouds my tall eye
With a mythical mist

And my craft wrecks on charts
That are older than reefs.
By skinlight and caveglow
And pulsedark beliefs

And tied to the mast
Of my fear, I regale,
By scalesight and sandfall,
That terrible tail.

—Walter H. Kerr