

# Barracoon

by [Peter Dreyer](#) (April 2024)



The Raft of the Medusa –by Théodore Géricault, 1818-19

**Ocean, soaking** me to the bone  
Revive me, for I cannot sleep  
And a perplexing thing so peek  
In early morning at my phone.

Gazing greedy, far off the bight,  
Rafting our shipwrecked barracoon, [\*]  
Deceive myself that some day, soon  
Some happy shore may heave in sight.

Protectress Gorgo, turn to stone

The blind who ravage Earth in play –  
Reboot your vengful stare today,  
Redeem the road our moguls roam!

She is not here. But far away  
The noise of wreck begins again,  
And awful through the icy rain  
On dying ocean breaks the day.<sup>[†]</sup>

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<sup>[\*]</sup> Barracoon = a slave holding pen, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barracoon>; see [Sir] V. S. Naipaul, *The Overcrowded Barracoon*, reviewed by Peter Dreyer in *The San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, April 22, 1973.

<sup>[†]</sup> A respectful nod to Lord Tennyson's great poem *In Memoriam* for shameless purloining of phrasing and metre. "If you must steal, steal from the best, who can well afford it."

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