Enigmas

You've asked me what the lobster is weaving there with his golden feet?
I reply, the ocean knows this.
You say, what is the ascidia waiting for in its transparent bell? What is it waiting for?
I tell you it is waiting for time, like you.
You ask me whom the Macrocystis alga hugs in its arms?
Study, study it, at a certain hour, in a certain sea I know.
You question me about the wicked tusk of the narwhal, and I reply by describing
how the sea unicorn with the harpoon in it dies.
You enquire about the kingfisher's feathers, which tremble in the pure springs of the southern tides?
Or you've found in the cards a new question touching on the crystal architecture of the sea anemone, and you'll deal that to me now?
You want to understand the electric nature of the ocean spines?
The armored stalactite that breaks as it walks?
The hook of the angler fish, the music stretched out in the deep places like a thread in the water?

I want to tell you the ocean knows this, that life in its jewel boxes
is endless as the sand, impossible to count, pure, and among the blood-colored grapes time has made the petal
hard and shiny, made the jellyfish full of light and untied its knot, letting its musical threads fall from a horn of plenty made of infinite mother-of-pearl.

I am nothing but the empty net which has gone on ahead of human eyes, dead in those darknesses, of fingers accustomed to the triangle, longitudes on the timid globe of an orange.

I walked around as you do, investigating the endless star, and in my net, during the night, I woke up naked, the only thing caught, a fish trapped inside the wind.

By Pablo Neruda and translated by Robert Bly