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Salvador Elizondo  
LA BELLE HELENE

a Pia

Close by in the hold of the ship  
Now he has a hunch that a haunch is at hand  
Or is it the haunch in the hold of the chip  
Or the hold of the ship that chapped a thousand  
haunches  
Or the chap in the ship that hunched a  
thousand holds  
Is this the hunch that faced a thousand chips

As is the case first luncheon then the chips  
Chapped mates chipping chops in the ship's  
shop  
A thousand faces in the ship's hold  
Five thousand holes in the mates' faces  
Or the hole that shipped a thousand mates  
In the hold of the ship's haunches

Is this a hole in the hold of the ship  
Or the hold of a ship without a mate  
Or the case of the mate without a face to  
behold  
Or the face beheld in the hold  
Are these the thousand faces that they shipped  
To meet the launches as would be the case

Is it the case that prompts too many ifs  
Or the ships that promptly face the case  
Of the mate without a face to launch the ships

Is this the trick that shipped a thousand cases  
Or the wake left by a thousand ships  
Launched to meet the faces that you meet

Is this the face that you meet in the hold  
Or the face of the mate at the mast of the ship  
Or the ship that a thousand faces met  
Or the hold that held a thousand mates  
Is this the hunch that met a thousand ships  
Or the mate that hunched a thousand shipholds

Is this the launch that met a thousand faces  
Or the mate that held a thousand launches  
Or the launch that faced a thousand mates  
Is this the mate that launched a thousand  
shipholds  
Or the launch that held a thousand shipmates  
Is this the launch that met a thousand ships

Or is it the ship that faced a thousand launches  
Is this the ship that launched a thousand faces  
Or the launch that faced a thousand ships  
Or is it the launch that shipped a thousand  
faces  
Or the face that shipped a thousand launches  
Was this the face that launch'd a thousand  
ships...