



6-15-2002

## Mark's View

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### Recommended Citation

Ballard, Barry (2002) "Mark's View," *Westview*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 2 , Article 23.  
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol21/iss2/23>

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# Mark's View

by Barry Ballard

Just understanding Twain was difficult  
(and it shouldn't have been), but the man seems  
at ease in this water, in this routine  
sea of shipwrecks wrecking others. He balks  
at those porous islands floating like sponges  
that soak up the bodies and the rotted  
plank, warning me not to read the dead  
biographies cast at our feet. He says,

“a man cannot be written,” or condoned,  
or excused, that we swim in our own deep  
waters; and that a soul may or may not  
be like the wind, but it's more than what's owned,  
more than those buttons and overcoats that speak  
in complex meanings all tied up in knots.

