

STANLEY PLUMLY has published one book of poems, *In The Outer Dark*, and a second, *Giraffe*, is forthcoming. He usually lives and teaches in Athens, Ohio, but is spending this year in England on a Guggenheim Fellowship.

#### LIGHT

One wife enters from nowhere  
to perform the laying-on of hands.  
Now you know what it is to be touched.

Your whole body is in light, as to be understood.

The woman walking from the end  
of the hallway has said nothing  
since she began. She is also your wife.

She is crying. She is like your body repeated.

The wife of the doors, the woman of rooms.  
She is the third person. The small moons  
of her hands: how they bring you back

from whatever dark to whatever body is.

#### DREAMSONG

I was in the middle of the way,  
with the lights on  
and the dark side rising.

I was kneeling, no traffic,  
I had the river  
under me; I believed in what

I wanted. I wanted to die.  
I wanted the whole  
day. So I rocked back and forth,

as in the cradle of myself, until my body  
let me. Then I rose  
and walked the water, like a son.

1.7.72

### IN SLEEP

So finally you float to the surface  
full of dead fish and the half-moon of a lung

and slowly, as in waking, you begin to open  
all your body, bob, and with both hands  
wipe the water clear

and with all your weight holding you up  
at last you begin to see what it was

the earth drifting, your parents dead  
and face down, drifting, like a bird  
towing a wind

your sister, like the past of all flesh, drifting

and one wife, one wife, one wife  
every one tied to the planet

all your dead drifting  
the cloud of your body tied

but the blue eye of the earth  
looking out

at silence  
at the absence of earth

the moon  
on the waters of your face  
shining back at you