

OUR SEPARATE TRIPS TO THE OCEAN

for O.

You hauled gear over your head,
waded the cold early river
only ten miles from finally
pouring itself out to the Pacific Ocean.
It couldn't wait. You rushed
back and forth until all that was left was
a rubber raft and me.

I wore the sweater your wife made you.
It was stretched out and patched up
as if you'd had a longer marriage.

While you were blowing up the boat,
I looked along the edge for pebbles.
I found a handful, buried them
in shallows when you called me over.

Afraid of water, your stories
of adventure, I cried
until you *made* me take the boat across.
You followed as you promised.

We stayed days, nights;
you would have stayed forever
if I hadn't come along.
I wanted to see what the end would be.
I wanted to see the Ocean.
I wanted to get back
and tell the story.