

## The Birdwatcher · *Jeffrey Greene*

I couldn't begin to tell  
my stepfather what he has missed.  
That would take every minute of my time.

What he has missed has nothing  
to do with what has become of us.  
That is of no consequence now.

In the pose of the bittern  
there's a balance of forces.  
It points its bill straight up  
into the face of gravity.  
One eye looks toward the wetlands.  
One eye is planted on me.  
It's as if presence  
is the work of a simple brain,  
a double exposure.

My stepfather believed  
that we might describe the bittern,  
distinguish it, making words  
a part of seeing  
and, of course, they are  
when balanced with affection.

How else could we talk  
about the world to ourselves?  
What else could sadden us more  
than to be severed from the affections  
of our own voices?

I can still see him  
at dawn on the deck of the cottage,  
the birdwatcher, the whole man I mean.