

Feeding · *David Wagoner*

When I dropped bread, they swam  
Out of nowhere, the fingerling  
Catfish, even darker  
Than the pool lying dead calm  
Over them and around them.

Those inches of black ribbon  
All held white crumbs like eyes  
And wavered themselves away  
In schools and disappeared  
Again into deeper water.

When I dropped more, what came  
Was an altogether stranger  
Nature of moving slow,  
As though the elders knew  
They could be slow to swim

But would still be in time  
To take what was their own  
Into their own gloom  
Of soft-barbed opening  
And closing jaws and turn

Away in easy curves  
With a sinewy suppleness,  
Undulant, fading down  
To what they might become  
Somewhere still more dim.

When I broke the final crust,  
What rose to the underface  
Of the pond (so slow, it seemed  
Too slow to lift a form  
That huge from so far under)

Has kept its place in the night  
Of my mind since I was four,  
Moving its perfectly sure,  
Unhurried, widening mouth  
Toward whiteness to darken it.