

## THE WATERMAN'S CHILDREN

We hear his feet in thick boots  
clattering the shells  
as he drags the soggy nets  
over the stern of the boat,  
and the pinebark whisper of his breath  
as he hangs the lines  
from one tree to another.

We watch his face  
coming onto the porch  
like something from the sun,  
deep red, so deep it is brown,  
wrinkle on wrinkle,  
turning to the father  
we know, the eyes  
lost among tight waves.

We feel his hands, so scarred  
they're the shells of oysters.  
Cut skin of the knuckles,  
he comes at night and touches  
our foreheads with his palm.  
The inside we feel  
has no pearl to disturb us.