

My Son Dreams That, As We Fished For Pumpkinseeds, A Shark Ate Me

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Did I hook the shark, and it yanked me in?

Did it leap, and pluck me off the pier?

If he remembers, he can't say;

he fears too much to lose the friend

who hits him flies and takes him fishing—

whom he loves, I'm proud to say, the way

I loved my dad. Years before heart failure

dragged him down, I dreamed that lions

ate him, Indians scalped him, burglars

shot him, cars ran over him. I'd wake—night

like a coffin covering me— and run

to the front room, where Dad sat reading.

"I dreamed you died," I'd sob.

He'd hug me, and soothe (just as I do),

"See? I'm fine," and give a goofy smile

like mine as my wife leads our boy to bed.

I sit alone, my life's small lamp fighting

to hold back—at least until he can swim

on his own—all the hungry shadows,

circling.