If a man is no more
than a creaky fishnet
around some sea,
what is the power
of my father’s death
so to stun me?

Heartbeaten tides
have washed him over;
yet here am I still
in the teeming medium
older only,
the struggling last

plasmic mortal
in his death’s vast
and voided realm;
only remembering
twenty years
after his storm

the new-coined blindness
of an afternoon
in the spangled nursery;
copying in
fourfold precision
his glittering every

poem and letter.
What death then was
felt of the sunflecked
morsels alighting
within the dappling
nursery checks
of the son’s heart,
or after the sun fell,
quilt-covert fantasies:
the trifling poet
of the deft and sordid
parcels despair

for the sun to steal
in quantum digestibles.
   You, father,
being a poet,
would understand
the fractioned thought,

of mankind blinded
but for the magician —
poet at the window
of the floodlit nursery,
seeing light conjoined
or discrete as dew

bubbling and falling
on vestigial fragments
of paternal bones.
Deceitful atoms beam
piecemeal on the seafloor.
   Eyeless fool, know

that that same poetry —
all we know of mercy —
kept for you Germany,
brought you to
this last filtering ocean
defending tyranny

and into vastness
humanly, flimsily.
That was our poetry, too,
and all our beauty
ephemeral necessity
stunned to virtue.