



Bernard Wills

Eel Poem

At that time I would haunt the harbor, breathing
the smell that it had of salt flake and sharp tar
and once, with that brown-glass water clearing,
I could see to the bottom, an undulating bar
of sand that the slow sculpins, odd flounder patrolled
and so it was that I could see the eel whip round to bite
some seconds after the hook and line unrolled.
I felt the jolt...I heaved the squirming shape into the light.

Ghastly, the silent victim writhed upon the dock
wriggling beneath the stacked up lobster traps.
I yanked it by the tail. I smashed its head to a rock,
five hefty clouts to kill the thing, five solid cracks
that splattered the stone with blood... the shock
of what had passed impressed sensation's sheeted wax.

