Sea Diamonds

Mark O'Hara

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SEA DIAMONDS

He came here either
because the fishing was good
or this late at night in late summer
no one else did.
It was two months
since the crib death of his daughter,
and he came here
because he could not imagine coming here,
with the same thoughts, for years.
Or he came because
he had read about people
finding in the rocks of the jetty
natural diamonds, polished by the sea.
Most nights he stood on the jetty's end
and cast out, far,
his body twisting like a gesture of denial.
When he couldn't tell the waves
from the sweat on his collar
he withdrew to the beach and cast again.
But this night he stayed on the jetty.
He thought he saw,
in a rock's cemented crevice,
a sparkling.
Legs heavy with high water,
he climbed out to sea,
and when he came to the spot
a wave bucked him, then revealed the rock.
He grabbed not loose diamonds but fast quartz.
Now he came to the reason for his coming:
he remembered his wife's cry,
the room, the mobile above the crib,
but for all he wished to forget,
he could not remember
trying to revive his daughter.
At this moment if the waves had not
knocked him off balance he would have
fallen to his knees anyway.

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