

Bodysurf

for Erin

To understand everything about the swell –
how on a given day the seventh in the cycle
provides the greatest chance to ride to shore
if caught where the rip collides with the surge,
where the wave pries a mouth wide
and prepares to heave its travelled miles –
to understand the moment of submission,
when to dive in and up the crest
in order to avoid a rabid tumble,
flung skyward out the other side
falling yards into the trough and humbled –
to understand that we're aligned
to leave behind horizons to the climbing wall,
hunched and turned three quarters,
believing that the travelling momentum
is such we'll be absorbed and pulled along,
so someone watching oceans from a towel
might raise herself a little on one elbow
and to her partner whisper, *Dolphins*.

Paul Maddern was born in Bermuda and now lives in County Down, Northern Ireland. His work has appeared in various journals and in *Incertus* (2007), an anthology of emerging poets in Northern Ireland. He is the recipient of a studentship from the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's University Belfast, where he is establishing an online archive of public poetry readings. In 2006 he was included in Poetry Ireland's *Introductions* reading series.