

SANDY POINT

for Kevin E. Maddox

A flounder follows the line
in its mouth, over the puzzle
frame of black rocks, to a silent man.
It is a dark fish now on land,
this high grass and sand, across
from the steel mill. My son
and my brother are my two sons,
only four years apart I am
father and brother, petitioning
for authority, for obedience,
for adoration. My son
throws in his line, pulls out
another fish, life from life.
He has every gift and does not
know my mother's dying wish.
Take care of Kala. Protect him.

I have a bay rod and reel,
always too much, and my brother
and son have Zippos, ten bucks
for any fish in the Point. Here
the ghosts of clippers full of Igbo,
Hausa, Wolof, Mandinke, and
more, all these notions of God,
ease by on invisible ships. I stop,
hoping for fish, and study
humidity rising with abandon,
boppers dancing the boogaloo,
the rippling egotism of light.

My boys take their fish home
to my mother. She laughs
at how big they are, how small.
Later, one morning, my brother

will go into another fit of anger,
troubling his twin sister, who is
his angel. He will threaten to walk
out into the street, the moving cars.
Five years to live, my mother
tells him, *It is a good day to die.*

Hook, line in the mouth.