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The Black Fish

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THE BLACK FISH

Once more the body folds down its heavy skin
Sadness fills the houses like moss over stone
a thickness when people
feed their hearts nothing but old bread
Today I saw something new
There is anger in the faces of some women
As the wars deepen soft men weaken into mod
. . . bright ties and tiny whimperings
that would shame a child
These sweet merchants of death hunt the innocent
I saw a man strong-arm his sullen wife
as if he wrestled a deer into the trunk
A new nun in town keeps three
messenger boys on the run
And there are pimps who hold back their girls' money
for just one more exhausting trick
There are men who sleep in doorways out of the snow
And snow buries the soldier's face like a stump
The graves are filled with bright bones
Bones slip fifty feet thru coal drifts
for a three-second swim in molten lava
Bones swirl smoke in the cremator's ovens
There are bones thin enough to open every lock
And bones swivel water inside your grandmother's knee
Bones my friend sift flour
and spin tiny white whirls on the far hill
It's not the gold scorpion . . . blood kernel
The dark fish of Pisces dies
slumped over the world Her giant bones glow
and hum two hundred years more
til the northern lights swing back