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## The Past

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## The Past

Sometimes it pushes against me  
like a body: the fat man who floats  
in the pool he built for his children.  
My father saw himself as a fat man  
sinking into so many shades of blue.  
But today he's slim again as he lifts himself  
out of the water. I follow him for blocks,  
clear to a schoolyard where we disappear  
into the peculiar light that falls  
across the playgrounds. Here, we inhabit  
the moment of his death for hours.  
I follow him all the way back to Ohio.  
He is the boy who risked his life leaping  
over a shadow. He staggers away from me,  
cursing the crocodile clamped to his leg.  
And if he should turn on his one good heel  
and tilt his head to the left or the right,  
I'd smile and wait for him to stick out his tongue.  
When I was a child he died for us every day.

*Lee Evans*