Fisherman

Galway Kinnell
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for Allen Planz

1

Solitary man, standing
on the Atlantic, high up on the floodtide
under the moon, hauling at nets
which shudder sideways under the mutilated darkness:
the one you hugged and slept with so often,
who hugged you and slept with you so often,
who has gone away now
into that imaginary moonlight
of the greater world, perhaps looks back at where you stand abandoned
on the floodtide, hauling at nets
and dragging from the darkness
anything, and feels tempted to walk over
and touch you
and speak
from that world to which she acquiesced so suddenly dumbfounded
but instead she only sings
in the sea-birds and breeze that you imagine you remember but that
you truly hear
as the dawn breaks in streaks across the fish-flashed water.

2

I don’t know how you loved
or what marriage was and wasn’t, between you—
only the closest friends understand anything of that—
but I know ordinary life was hard
and the two of you grappled side by side with the hard, ordinary
difficulties
and worry joined your brains’ faces in pure, baffled lines,
and therefore the most caring part of you must go
with her, imprinted into her—imprinted now
into that world which only she doesn’t fear any longer—which you,
   too, will have ceased fearing—
and wait there to recognize you into it
after you’ve lived, lived past the sorrow
if that happens, after all the time in the world.