

Grandparents

We have our grandparents at the wrong end of life.
True, they beacon what lies ahead
otherwise inexplicable,
but then nod and deconcoct
from everything they have made or built or said
into the studio of light, or of remembrance,
who can say? --
before we have wisdom enough to recognize it
or even felt the need,
before we have will to sit, learning the art of surrender
and what ground is worth making our stand on.
Under my hand, I carry a jingle of questions in my pocket.
In my mouth, gaps where teeth must have been
and another name I seem to remember being called,
but who knows?
True, the simple loves of grandparents
were, if we were fortunate,
the soft encapsulation of the idea of us
before we were,
or were pleasing,
or knew how to begin to know them,
digested into us,
who can imagine how?
But so much later, when the macadam
peters under my feet into the gravel of anguish
on the vanishing road,
I picture their flashlights approaching
through the dark.