

# *Daniel Hoffman*

## A Stillness

Each bead of the mist is burning  
with the joy  
of a resurrected soul.

A will within it  
draws it back from me a little — the cove,  
a beach of shallow pools  
behind the sandbars, and the bay  
without motion  
blending, somewhere  
into the fog, the infinite empire  
of floating fiery light.

Alone,  
tracing the cove that curves  
like a breast and slowly fills  
the shrinking beach with light

a heron  
stalks. She stands  
on one leg very still, for a long time.

The blade of her beak  
jabs  
— water breaks and the speared minnow flashes in air,  
is swallowed before  
I can be sure  
she has moved at all.

A ripple spreads its dying rings.

She has been given  
an invisible sign,  
she reaches out great wings and launches  
into slow deliberate flight, trailing  
legs like reeds,  
thrusting the serpent's curve of throat  
toward the all-consuming light

where earth melts into water,  
water into air and the air  
is alive with fire —

She's gone, leaving a stillness where I  
breath in  
a savage calm beyond desire.