

Tenderly, tenderly

We grew to know the good from the bad, the uninhibited
from the shell-shocked. That summer the delay took root
at last, as we ran, headlong, towards the sandbank. We stopped

at noon. By then we were tired and careless. We began
to contemplate our return, to go back to the shoreline
we had only newly left. In that place only the smallest

disturbances were noticed, the larger eccentricities
passed by unremarked and slid, still hidden, beneath wet
coverlets. Our bank was threatened, the day promised

a quiet kind of uncertainty which would pass only
with a particular reluctance and a particular effort, the kind
we rarely spare. Still our placement faltered, our feet

let us down, failed to keep us upright, betrayed the weakness
of our grip. I bent low, my back a vessel, a carefully wrought
craft. I could hold you long enough to take your weight

on mine, double the body that my weak feet failed to shore
up, recast your doubt as certainty and my own as a solid place
to rest. That same construction, the same weak artifice, held

for as long as we needed it to hold. And no longer. The end came
at its appointed hour, heralding itself and none other.