

Grille. At thirty-four  
 r ghost I follow in  
 at hisses overhead.  
 o make ghosts of us all,  
 yer of ghosts knows how  
 the dark: no wonder  
 l to Walt, always on edge,  
 arking, the brink where they fall  
 astles of our misconduct . . .

nous, cruises among ghosts,  
 race. Was it from this  
 lge, reaching up to Walt  
 out of this River, this Harbor,  
 se, these sexual shadows, made  
 , your dread success?  
 eceptions—if you did it  
 ; show me your toys, ghost,  
 ents out of which you rise,

ones, from death to be  
 r. What did you learn,  
 it green teacher of the gradual,  
 was sudden, a genius in need  
 :nt, a poet not by grace  
 good works? I still do not  
 it I stand under you here,  
 hadows where apprenticeship  
 course, only voyeurism.

ou haunt me far from home.  
 t seeing is half-believing.

v Garretttsville. By forty-four I know  
 your beginning *lost at land*, your end *at sea*:  
 sometimes beginnings can be more desperate  
 than ends, patrimony more than matrimony,  
 and middle age the worst despair of all.  
 I do not find you here, or in the bars,  
 or Laukhuff's, or that yellow restaurant—  
 not even on the beach you walked with Walt,  
 hand in hand, you told him: *never to let go*.

But that is where you find me. Take my hand  
 as you gave yours to him. We suffer from  
 the same fabled disease, and only the hope  
 of dying of it keeps a man alive. Keeps!  
 I press your poems as if they were Wild Flowers  
 for a sidelong grammar of paternity.  
 We join the Fathers after all, Hart, rejoin  
 not to repel or repeal or destroy, but to fuse,  
 as Walt declared it: wisdom of the shores,

easy to conceive of, hard to come by, to choose  
 our fathers and to make our history.  
 What takes us has us, that is what I know.  
 We lose, being born, all we lose by dying:  
 all. I have seen the Birthplace—a strange door  
 closes on a stranger, and I walk away.  
 Soon the shadows will come out of their corners and spin  
 a slow web across the wallpaper. Here  
 is where you met the enemy and were theirs.

Hart, the world you drowned, for is your wife:  
 a farewell to mortality, not my life.

From poem "Decades" in Fellow Feelings  
 by Richard Howard