

# MY FATHER DID HEADSTANDS

ROGER NASH

Sunlight on the floor was unmasked, immediately,  
as a yellow thought in my father's head.  
Whatever he was thinking, it warmed floorboards,  
urged them to creak. An ear glued  
to their polish, he'd listen for—what?—the gallop  
of underground horses. His inverted lips  
made us hear words differently,  
as though he were lip-syncing, out-of-time,  
to a strange voice he'd just discovered  
in the unpretentiousness of worn carpet.  
“Our good points are nothing to be proud of.  
We depend on huge errors in others.  
You're honest, but only by contrast with people  
who're not.” Toes where his lips should be wagged  
eloquently up and down. In the mirror  
opposite: his hatless feet, whiter  
by far than an old comb carved  
from bone inside a glass full of water.  
As he somersaulted back on his feet, it seemed,  
to us children, that his shadow stayed upside-down,  
loyal to the true, the headstanding  
view on things. It walked out the door  
with self-effacing balance, under a well-mown sky.