

Night Fishing For Walleyes

We wait for the early phase
of the moon to hide us,
bare thighs gripped
cool by the lake as we
reel from the edge
of a rubble reef
we have thread a hundred
times before: but
that was laughing
in the blue and green
plash of sunlight,
as we pencilled rough maps
and strung yellow buoys
to mark our bearings
in the night.

Now black
is slabbed like sabotage
around us, waiting
for a slip on rocks
smooth as skulls or
a stagger into deep pits
thick with leeches
and spiny weeds.

Red mist drifts
from a lamp rigged
near the shore,
suffuse as paint sprayed
through a thin nozzle of light
lingering long enough
to flush our buoys
into faint flares
on the suspiring mass of black.

And yet we cast,
silent stalk waters
themselves furtive as sleep.

Teeth glistening red
your rod-tip wavers
pulled suddenly.
The struggle is so brief
I do not hear it dragged in
until scorched in air
eyes blaze violation.

Now it fights:
my net feeble beneath
two shocked spheres,
red-flecked phosphors
burning for water
—voiceless, it bucks,
the body of a slick wineskin
filled to bursting,
but refusing hands.
And then a final
heave and twisting slap

and we are left hands
dripping fish spawn
and heavy breaths,
blind to mute whorls
of bloodied water,
our buoys scattering across
the lake like dashed embers.

— *Salvatore Difulco*