

ROBERT E. McDONOUGH

Storm on the River

Promised my son a Cuyahoga cruise:
bridges, mills, factories, etc.
I had it figured:
\$4.25 for tickets, plus beer and soda.
Father showing son pollution compared to
father taking son fishing:
a poem on the death of nature
cheap at the price.

Up a darkening river
contempt seemed too simple.
The steel mill—furnace, chimney
thick twisting pipes—grew like a tree.
The lawn in front of the paint factory
was public relations.

The storm struck as we turned about.
Heavy, hanging rain did not blot the shore
but flattened it, joined us to it,
ship and shore contained by rain.
In the river's shelter we felt no threat,
just a slight roll,
admonitory nudge from a huge hand,
a reminder.

"Tribe Truck Leaves for Tucson."

The best dreams occur elsewhere
so we send out these men to plow
through the Midwest; bearing our hopes
in bats and balls, stopping each night
for women and drink, they take the news
from this weary city out into the desert—
that we mean to have spring again.