

## RICHARD HAGUE

### *Limestone*

Shell on tooth on bone, lime's  
binding tight around them. No light:  
a hundred fifty million years.  
But watch, this common Tuesday in July,  
the boy across Duck Creek  
crack a flat slab open  
and shout to see a fish  
come blackly out of rock, chopping  
with its teeth the strange and sudden sun.

Or elsewhere, by the Great Miami,  
a rough-ridged, hand-sized stone,  
dumped here years ago  
from some high place in Ohio  
once the delta of the Appalachian River.  
Two hundred thirty million years.  
But watch again: a young man on his knees  
runs his fingers lightly down the ridges,  
feeling roundworms in those lime-cast tunnels  
thicker than his thumb.

Tooth entwined with bone entwined  
with shell are bound together  
in the dark of rock's hard time  
until the hillside high above the creek  
gives way, until the mountain breaks,  
and ancient limestone bares its frozen moments  
to the sunlight of our days,  
while through the brilliant hollows  
new waters scour and make clear  
old time's shelled foundations.