

## Softly Into Night

The face of one I thought I knew  
Reflects back from the pond,  
Familiar, I suppose it's true --  
Yet distant, sad, and wan.  
The bobber darts; the line snaps tight  
The cane pole bends with weight  
I take the catfish in my hands;  
Then pondering his fate,  
I throw him back again.

I focus on my aging eyes,  
The graying of my hair --  
Staring down in sad surprise,  
In recognition where  
Not so long ago it seems  
That face was strong and tan.  
Full of youth and hope to be --  
A vibrant, happy man.  
Now who is this I see?

The bobber disappears from sight,  
The cane pole bends once more  
Another catfish, belly white  
I haul into the shore.  
I guess I'm feeling kind today,  
For even though he's grand --  
I toss him back into his home;  
I bait the hook again,  
As Darkness slowly grows.

Somewhere along the winding way  
I lost my mooring lines,  
Drifting far from shore, away --  
To the beating heart of time.  
I'm not the man I thought I'd be,  
Or hoped to be, it's true.  
The lines upon that weathered face,  
The eyes a deepened blue --  
Reminders of these days.

The bobber, I can barely see;  
The sky grows darker still --  
I guess that I should leave it be --  
But cannot fetch the will  
To walk the mile home again  
Or leave it all below --  
As darkness chases off the light  
I drop my pole, and go  
Softly into Night.

TMJ April 14, 2006