SANDY POINT

for Kevin E. Maddox

A flounder follows the line in its mouth, over the puzzle frame of black rocks, to a silent man. It is a dark fish now on land, this high grass and sand, across from the steel mill. My son and my brother are my two sons, only four years apart I am father and brother, petitioning for authority, for obedience, for adoration. My son throws in his line, pulls out another fish, life from life. He has every gift and does not know my mother’s dying wish. Take care of Kala. Protect him.

I have a bay rod and reel, always too much, and my brother and son have Zippos, ten bucks for any fish in the Point. Here the ghosts of clippers full of Igbo, Hausa, Wolof, Mandinke, and more, all these notions of God, ease by on invisible ships. I stop, hoping for fish, and study humidity rising with abandon, boppers dancing the boogaloo, the rippling egotism of light.

My boys take their fish home to my mother. She laughs at how big they are, how small. Later, one morning, my brother
will go into another fit of anger, troubling his twin sister, who is his angel. He will threaten to walk out into the street, the moving cars. Five years to live, my mother tells him, *It is a good day to die.*

Hook, line in the mouth.