

nailed a stick and 38 driftwood scraps
into a salmon, mounted it on a board,
and hung it above the fireplace.

Before supper they toppled
driftwood 8 x 6's end over end
grunting together tough as life.
Then the saw hacking back and forth
between them coughed and coughed
sawdust onto the sand,

my mother and father
breathing and pulling together.

MY DAUGHTER ASKS IF I HAVE A PHILOSOPHY

she needs one for her yearbook.
I feel too small for a philosophy,
I'm trying to see through a hedge
to back onto a busy street.
We settle on: 2 is half of 1.
She asks if it's mine.
I say yes.
It's the first spring day.
It's weather for an affair.

INARTICULATE PEOPLE

i.

Inarticulate people get to the bottom
of things first.
At the Twin Tavern, Dave,
the unglib one, lumps and bumps
and makes a quick movement
before belting out the mot juste.
I've even been developing
some ambitions for my younger son
who doesn't talk good.
We didn't think he could talk at all
until a lady in her own kitchen
said, "Isn't that a nice dog?"
and he said,
"That's not a dog, it's a horse!"

ii.

One fall afternoon pulling grape
vines down out of the trees

I heard my neighbor who wears
a teeshirt every day of the year
saying, with fear in his voice,
"You better watch out
he could hurt you."
I kept pulling, my attention
was still up in the trees,
but finally I said to myself,
I wonder does that
have anything to do with Bowman?
I checked, and Bowman wasn't
in the back yard, and he wasn't
behind the blue house.
Then I saw him
back of the white house.
The fireman was standing
safe behind his fence
still pleading with him.
I ran and scooped up Bowman
and just then a big German shepherd
tore around the corner of the house.
Bowman, who was looking back
being carried, pointed at
the dog chasing us,
and asked,
"What's his name?"

TRAVEL

What I wouldn't like to do is travel,
get out of my rut
and find myself some place
where I don't know where to buy
a paper or dink some coffee.
Where I want to be is in my rut,
I don't want to be distracted,
the summer is ideal:

1 pair of shoes
2 pairs of pants
4 or 5 shirts
no socks

Rise at 7 A.M., put on shoes,
dusting off my feet on the porch steps,
walk across the river to school,
read the Times.
Then play in my office with my poems.
Lunch, walk home,
nap, maybe grade papers, sometimes
Debbie sits on my stomach