

Night Diving

We suit up briskly
on the deserted dock
sun sinking down
beyond Klein Bonaire,
then, weighted and rigged,
plunge into darkness.

Our lights beam out
into nothingness.
Caught between water and air, I
struggle
while the others
sink leisurely,
hoses looped protectively
in a vinyl hug.

Breathe deep, I coax myself, as
meeting the reef's edge
we drift down the wall of corals.

Twenty, thirty, or sixty feet
it's all the same silent
swaying profusion of forms.
Drunk with looking I
forget momentarily what we are—
puppets on thin strings of air.

Drawn down by dim phosphorescence,
I am stricken with an urge to go deeper
and finally disappear.
Burdened and masked,
thrashing in the depths—then,
they are there
signaling it's time to return.

In the gradual ascent
relief floods me as
shore currents tug like memories.
A southern stingray flaps past
its pale underbelly
an old-fashioned hankie
waved in truce
or farewell.

