

wrist-wrestling father

Orval Lund

For my father

On the maple wood we placed our elbows
and gripped hands, the object to bend
the other's arm to the kitchen table.
We flexed our arms and waited for the sign.

I once shot a wild goose.
I once stood not twenty feet from a buck deer unnoticed.
I've seen a woods full of pink lady slippers.
I once caught a 19-inch trout on a tiny fly.
I've seen the Pacific, I've seen the Atlantic,
I've watched whales in each.

I once heard Lenny Bruce tell jokes.
I've seen Sandy Koufax pitch a baseball.
I've heard Paul Desmond play the saxophone.
I've been to London to see the Queen.
I've had dinner with a Nobel Prize poet.

I wrote a poem once with every word but one just right.
I've fathered two fine sons
and loved the same woman for twenty-five years.

But I've never been more amazed
than when I snapped my father's arm down to the table.