

ROSS DONLON

*The Manly Boys*

They dived for coins where the ferry docked,  
slotting loose change beneath their tongues,  
stopping us as we arrived for the day,  
white faced and fresh from the suburbs.

Lolling in the water, the *Manly Boys*,  
eye whites upraised, mouths silent,  
watched a tossed bob sparkle and flicker  
high, then enter the water with a flash.  
But they swam faster than the coin  
sashayed and spangled, until fingers slipped silver  
quick as a doubloon into a pirate mouth.

From the other side of the sea's glass,  
they were a boy I could never be;  
they a man-boy, seal-like, sea being,  
me a child on leave from a suburb,  
longing either to be that boy  
or else the coin held tight in his mouth.