Grunion Fishing

by Ed Higgins

"Of course, most of the things I look back on fondly I never actually experienced." —Jon Favreau

As spilled on a sandy Corona del Mar beach
both in moonlight and starlight so lovely
and strangely sad as if receding still
on the waves there in lost time or no time at all
except for nostalgia now, or as it actually happened maybe
those flickerings of pale silver on thousands of grunion
making the whole surf-pounded beach alive
with the magic incandescence of slender wriggling fish.

And we two once waiting under bluish moonlight at high tide
that long summer's night ago while giddy in the crashing waves
with scooping up whole handfuls of slippery small fish
into buckets bright with overflowing moon.

Using flashlights so as not to scare the fish
watching the female arching her body
as her tail sinks deep into the fluid sand
while the male curls around her
milt flowing down her silvery sides and belly
fertilizing buried eggs beneath.

Then later wrapped in one another's arms
listening to the sound of ourselves
pounding in our veins as the waves recede.

Overwhelmed ever after by the ability to catch
starlight's incandescence ourselves:
far-traveling light and flecks of photon stars
which must stay momentarily or forever in the mind.

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All beneath the spawning of that bright above us sky
on a warm California beach.