

# The First Day

*by* John Riley

When they told me there was still no sign of your boat, that they regretted there was no more that could be done but to wait for the tide to do its work, their staring faces full of rehearsed compassion, I turned without a word and walked down the pier, resisting the urge to dive into the breaking waves below, on through the fish market with its heavy once reassuring smells, up the hill past the park where the acorns had begun to fall and the surface roots of a silver maple weaved through the black top soil like shoelaces in a fishmonger's grimy boots, on to the top of the hill where our tiny house waited, the doors locked, last night's dark sealed inside.

