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## Coon Island: Two Poems in Dedication

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## Coon Island: Two Poems in Dedication

*after Heaney, in memory of my father*

**Ed Madden**

### I. Rose of Sharon

There was a sunlit absence,  
a chill despite the sun up  
and the hot wind,  
the hyacinths sunk

back into the grass,  
and the daffodils—  
the bulbs he dozed  
across the yard

with a bushhog—gone too.  
So, what was left was just  
a Rose of Sharon  
no bigger than a weed,

leaning with the weight  
of three blooms. She stood  
beside it, that June,  
in her church clothes.

Now she sits in the quiet  
house, or reads, or turns  
toward the chair  
where he used to sit

and read.  
Here is his Bible,  
a slip of paper  
still marking some verse,

and here is love  
like the woodbox stocked  
with small logs,  
ready for what's ahead.

## II. The Angelus

All around the house there are raccoons,  
as if their image could deflect the history  
of what happened, of whose farms and homes  
were here before my grandpa bought the soggy  
bottom fields between the backed-up Cache  
and the dredged line of Rimmel Ditch.  
But here above her chair: two peasants, his cap  
in his hands, her hands clasped, a church  
on the horizon. Between the couple lies  
a basket of potatoes, which masks the small  
coffin Millet painted over, the skies  
dark with hidden loss, the bells that toll  
the difference between what we see and know.  
Even from this distance, I hear them now.