

Raymond Carver

FOR TESS

Out on the Strait the water is whitecapping,
as they say here. It's rough, and I'm glad
I'm not out. Glad I fished all day
on Morse Creek, casting a red Daredevil back
and forth. I didn't catch anything. No bites
even, not one. But it was okay. It was fine!
I carried your dad's pocketknife and was followed
for a while by a dog its owner called Dixie.
At times I felt so happy I had to quit
fishing. Once I lay on the bank with my eyes closed,
listening to the sound the water made,
and to the wind in the tops of the trees. The same wind
that blows out on the Strait, but a different wind, too.
For a while I even let myself imagine I had died—
and that was all right, at least for a couple
of minutes, until it really sank in: *Dead*.
As I was lying there with my eyes closed,
just after I'd imagined what it might be like
if in fact I never got up again, I thought of you.
I opened my eyes then and got right up
and went back to being happy again.
I'm grateful to you, you see. I wanted to tell you.