

Zed

Somehow I always believed if we live
faultless lives, kind and generous,
if we sit at the bedside of those who have
no one else, if we bend to rub the ears
of the dog hungry for small attentions,
rock the baby in our arms
so mom can sleep in the next room,
hours sliding by like gentle ghosts,
if we sit down with the small boy
and carve the alphabet to zed,
if we ask the name of the doll, held
so sweetly in the little girl's arms,
if we kindly lie, praising the bland dish
served with love as we visit the home
of an old friend, sit on the patio,
watch monarchs land on milkweed
halfway to the place ancient memory
calls home because we have no other life
than this one, if we remember the far boat
of long ago where a boy and an old man
cast their lines into the still water
of evening, if we are kind to ourselves
we can be kind to others, and then
we'll be protected. Our children will be safe.
We can leave this earth in peace.
Oh, my dear friend, I remember how you held
your baby in your arms as we sat in the grass
on a summer day, and we never imagined
we'd outlive our children