

Randall Jarrell - Mail Call

The letters always just evade the hand
One skates like a stone into a beam, falls like a bird.
Surely the past from which the letters rise
Is waiting in the future, past the graves?
The soldiers are all haunted by their lives.
Their claims upon their kind are paid in paper
That established a presence, like a smell.
In letters and in dreams they see the world.
They are waiting: and the years contract
To an empty hand, to one unuttered sound --
The soldier simply wishes for his name.