

My Daughter and Apple Pie

She serves me a piece of it a few minutes
out of the oven. A little steam rises
from the slits on top. Sugar and spice -
cinnamon - burned into the crust.
But she's wearing these dark glasses
in the kitchen at ten o'clock
in the morning - everything nice -
as she watches me break off
a piece, bring it to my mouth,
and blow on it. My daughter's kitchen,
in winter. I fork the pie in
and tell myself to stay out of it.
She says she loves him. No way
Could it be worse.

Raymond Carver

Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year

October. Here in this dank, unfamiliar kitchen
I study my father's embarrassed young man's face.
Sheepish grin, he holds in one hand a string
of spiny yellow perch, in the other
a bottle of Carlsbad Beer.

In jeans and denim shirt, he leans
against the front fender of a 1934 Ford.
He would like to pose bluff and hearty for his posterity,
Wear his old hat cocked over his ear.
All his life my father wanted to be bold.

But the eyes give him away, and the hands
that limply offer the string of dead perch
and the bottle of beer. Father, I love you,
yet how can I say thank you, I who can't hold my liquor either,
and don't even know the places to fish?

