



# Shipwrights

*The Review of De-centered English*

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## **Long Distance**

By E. O'Riley

We know the day is getting near.  
The letter came. With a date.  
Now, like a soldier waiting to deploy  
all we can do is mark time

and love  
and *love*.

We soothe ourselves with words.  
"We've survived worse."  
"We'll pretend you're off to the war."  
"At least you won't return in a body bag."

I know.

I know

we have both taken different roads,  
one in need of paving,  
the other almost indiscernible.

By some stroke of luck

they crossed,

their crosses

borne. So I hold on to you like a frightened child

holds on to its blanket, close to its heart.

And I rub the satin trimming of you,

wearing it thin until it disappears between my fingers

and I am left with the feeling of my own skin.