



Wave drawing, by J. Bolz

Richard Slota

Mother Like an Army

Mother like an army
raped the darling child
unhinged, glassy-eyed, wild.

Packed us to the beach, misled,
covered me with her raping castle
up to my raped head.

Tides cold, dreams defiled.
Mother like an army
raped the buried child.

Another wave falls.
I close my eyes and see
sex transacted on me.
Another wave falls.

Mother's permanent wave
raised me, slapped me.

“Greedy son, small and dead,
selfish son,” mother said,
“Drown when I say drown.
Say only what I say I said.”

And I was small and I was defiled.
Mother like an army
abandoned the buried child.

Another wave falls.
Army like a mother
drafted me, a gutless soldier,

to gut and autopsy cadavers,
bone dust flecking my gloves
breaking heads with saws.

Another wave falls.
Exhumed, I am this odd old man,
not small, not dead, who watches now

mother’s castles round and bow
to waves, I am this odd old man
who, in turn, shovels mother under.

I close my eyes and see
sex transacted on me.

Another wave falls;
her name washes away.

Another wave falls;
Her acts, my acts, stay.

Nothing I feel or say,
nothing I right or write,
washes them away.

Another wave falls, appalls,
murmurs malicious rumors.

Richard Slota writes poetry, plays, novels and non-fiction. He just published a nonfiction book, *Captive Market: Commercial Kidnapping Stories from Nigeria*. His first novel, *Stray Son*, will be published this fall. His plays *Babatunde in Hell* and *Mascularity* will have staged readings this October in San Francisco. His short play, *We All Walk In Shoes Too Small* was produced at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. *Dream Big and Famous Michael* was staged by Solano Repertory Company in northern California. He is a member of the Playwright's Center of San Francisco and serves on the Mental Health Board of San Francisco.