

WILLIAM BEDFORD

Tin Child

My father follows me like the tin child
They laid in his redwood coffin.
Dried seaweed was the flower the seamen
Threw into their coffins.
A sunflower would have suited him better.
But a tin child is what they buried with him,
Following his widow's instructions.
I knew what they planned with their cold mouths,
The women of the village.
But he escaped the rotting timbers,
He climbed over bones and mementos,
A stalking skeleton among worms and sins.
He follows me like the tin child
I was before they shut the lid of the coffin.
My mother's tears water the grave,
Her hand clutching the hand of the tin child.
Which is me. Which is always me.