

DAVID BARRICK

RECIPE

After Mary Pratt's *Fish Head in Steel Sink* (1983)

He almost made it—
almost reached the sound
of funnelling rapids, sputtering
plunk and gargle of a deep drain
pipe's exit, four holes with no key.

The kitchen happens
above him somewhere.
Aroma of lemon sauce, beets,
and broccoli. Dinner voices
titter out there, tinny and nimble
vibrations along tankard walls
of oily steel. Water droplets squint
the blue ceiling back at itself.

This is what's left:
a pink flesh ruff,
a gentle ridge of jaw
swallowing at the steel basin.
All kinesthetics gone, only
an orange streak afterimage.

Still, this linseed sunset eye
will not dissolve in broth
stock, gumbo, or stew.
There is no recipe
for this catch in the throat,
for a bright laurel of fish bones.