

Curt Rode**CATCH AND RELEASE**

I wonder if there was a time
When aliens
Simply lowered heavy test lines
Baited with what suited
The season, the time of day,
Our studied moods.

Maybe, once, inside
Each slice of turtle cake,
Letter postmarked Prague,
Or new lover's neck,
A hook waited to snatch
Us from our kitchens.

Maybe our exhilaration
Was the aliens' sporting fight,
Our ecstasy our souls dragged
Through the rigid liquid of windows,
Past the anchoring trees,
Into air too thin

For our long survival.
I wonder how long—
Gripped over the railing
By the throat and knees,
All tiger-stripe and rainbow—
Our souls shined for them,

How long we panted and writhed
Before they noticed our eyes—
Blinking like lucid dinner plates—
And they dropped what's left in us
To snap to life in its swimming
Back into darkness, away.