

**Wilderness House Literary Review 4/4**

*Howard Good*

**The Poor Swimmer's Guide To Modern Swim Strokes**

The more zeros added,  
the greater the sensation of drowning.

How quickly our pockets  
fill up with water.

I rest my feet on the waves,  
but my head on the shore,

and silently count the seconds  
between one useless cry

and the next.

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### Childhood Portrait

When the old mare collapsed  
between the shafts of the milk wagon

and the wagon driver leaped  
to the ground cursing

the tallest trees leaned forward  
as if to better see

my teachers call the house  
your son they said

too young to wonder  
what's worse as I was punched

in the head and slapped  
the anger of the man slashing at it

with a whip or its wish  
to get up again and go on