



SWALLOW, 1 swallow; 2 swallow, vt. 1. To take into the stomach, as food. 2. To engulf; take in; accept; believe credulously; endure quietly. 3. To take back; recant.
SWALLOW¹, n. That which is swallowed at one time; the act of swallowing.
SWALLOW², n. A small, swift bird with long, pointed wings, and forked tail.
SWARM, 1 swarm; 2 swarm, imp. of SWIM, v.

The Barn Swallow

On Matagorda Bay fishing along
The north shoreline in the fall,
Team 11 on the water together again
With our guide and friend Al Garrison,
The man who taught us to fish the marsh,
The man who taught us to read the water -
To watch for nervous water whose pattern
Differs from the prevailing wind and tide,
The man who taught us about egrets and gulls
Following redfish down the marsh channel,
A man who sings the redfish song.

But today, it's about the weather
Coming at us, moving toward us
Across the golden-green grass,
Our team of anglers watching, amazed
As the dark sky bears down upon us,
Clouds rolling and reforming with energy
As the front pushes on toward the Gulf.

And then we feel it -
The north wind starting as a few puffs,
Then growing steadily to a cool blow,
A wind accompanied by swarms of swallows,
Swallows that swing low above the grass,
Some going up, some coming down,
Chasing insects borne by the wind
That sends waves through the seed heads,
Swallows dashing up, zooming down,
Pointed wings looking sleek in relief,
A red-bibbed flying machine on display.

I breathe the fresh wind in deep,
Sucking in the essence of a perfect moment,
Sucking it inside me, within me, for me,
Forever imprinting the singular moment
When I saw the dance of the barn swallows
On the north shore of Matagorda Bay
One fall when the weather changed.