

Madronna Holden

On Grays Harbor, the Wind

On Grays Harbor the wind
is a country of its own.

It asserts its territory so emphatically
Chehalis children were taught
to run along the tide line
with their arms outstretched

measuring the wind's mouth
so it would be ashamed
of itself and calm down.

Pioneers didn't know that trick:

Out on Damon's Point
one of his descendants
remembers A. O. Damon
for the disappearing flag
of a sheet hoisted as his sail
as he blew off on one
scheme after another

leaving the wind to terrorize
the three-sided mail dock
where he abandoned
his sister and the children
in her care.

Maybe he really thought
he would build a fourth wall
on their shelter someday—
the way he promised.

But nobody measured
the mouth of his promises
to get the wind
blowing out of him
to calm down.

