

The Steam

A cold, cold night
And I watch the steam
roll off the top of a building,
And know that
I am the steam:
Warm and full at the beginning,
Visibly unique,
Always changing,
Eventually fading into oblivion.
To have a purpose at one time...
To have none now...
I am the steam.
Seeming to come from nowhere,
Tangible for but a second,
Then gone.
Gone for such a long, long time.

Was no one else watching me?
A short but peaceful existence?
No.
Even in that second the wind blew
As I strived to remain whole,
As I strived to remain a part of
the cold night air that made me live.

My faulty, uncertain path
Winds ever upward.
If you've never seen a teardrop climb,
Watch the steam,
Its misty wrath uplifted.
Watch me.

Note: Written in 1967, after my brother, Cody, died in the 1966 fire on board the U.S.S. Oriskany.