

CHAD ABUSHANAB

## Halloween

For Halloween this year I'll be a man.  
I'll work my hands to bloody rags and use  
my fists to prove which truths I understand.

I'll paint my face into a mask of bruise,  
like coming home after a barroom fight.  
A man should fight, my father said, and lose

sometimes—his beaten brow will mock the night.  
I'll swallow up the pint of Cutty Sark.  
I'll stumble home and fumble with the light.

He said the bottle barely leaves a mark  
burning away the places where you've bled.  
On Halloween, I'll drink the autumn dark.

I'll be a man the way my father said.  
On Halloween, we're closer to the dead.  
His teeth were crooked and his hands were red.