



SHARON OLDS

b. 1942

My Son the Man



Suddenly his shoulders get a lot wider,
the way Houdini would expand his body
while people were putting him in chains. It seems
no time since I would help him put on his sleeper, [him] to
5 guide his calves into the shadowy interior, [the] gold
zip him up and toss him up and
catch his weight. I cannot imagine him
no longer a child, and I know I must get ready,
get over my fear of men now my son
10 is going to be one. This was not
what I had in mind when he pressed up through me like a
sealed trunk through the ice of the Hudson,
snapped the padlock, unsnaked the chains,
appeared in my arms. Now he looks at me and [appeared]
15 the way Houdini studied a box
to learn the way out, then smiled and let himself be manacled.

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