

She was laughing as the day boat moved out on the sea waves, a kind of shriek with every rise and dip. Some of the fishermen, with their just-opened beers, were beginning to collect nearby, along the rail, and they were laughing too, a little, at something that was just between them, and what was between them just then was our mother.

We were laughing too, my sister and I, partly because we were cold, and partly because not laughing would mean we didn't know what was funny, and partly because, as our mother had told our father as soon as we'd slammed the car doors shut, "Willie, this is a vacation, and what's a vacation without a little fun?"

From "The Gulf"  
*Shenandoah*, 1992