

Because I was good to Telly in his life,

because I taught him Alice Neel,
and fed him frozen mealworms,
(until I found out he'd
lose his bright red tail color
for that pleasure),
because I paid 100 dollars
for a pet sitter to come
when I was away on trips (never liking those
who said their beta did just fine
sitting on the edge of their office desk
over the long weekend—how would you
like it not to eat for three
days, I wanted to ask), for choosing
carefully among the pet
sitters, interviewing, for looking for one who took a fish

seriously and
told beta stories about how smart they
are, coming up
to say hi in the morning, checking you
out with a certain calm or anxious
look in the eye, because
I believed
in one fish's
brain and life and skills, because
I put him in a painted wooden
egg at the end and drove him down
to the famous arching
yellow bridge of Pittsburgh and
emptied him out into the
frozen Monongahela saying
prayers for my

lover or husband or brother
of a year,
because of this I am certain
he sent me a
gift from the china blue
rivers of heaven, a lovely man, who
first kissed me on
that bridge,
"Kissing Bridge," as he named it a few months later, sending the photo
after rain of "Kissing
Bridge underwater" scrawled with his loose
sprawling letters, because all things are
connected, a
circle,
bread on the water, as my mother said,
always comes home.

