Not Waving but Drowning

By Stevie Smith

Nobody heard him, the dead man,
   But still he lay moaning:
   I was much further out than you thought
   And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking
   And now he’s dead
   It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,
   They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
   (Still the dead one lay moaning)
   I was much too far out all my life
   And not waving but drowning.


Source: New Selected Poems (New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1988)