

Mom's Canoe

Do you remember your old canoe?
Wooden wide-bellied, tapered ends
made to slip through tight river bends
swiftly, like shadow.
Hull ribbed delicately, wing of bird
Sometimes seen, never heard when it flew
through the water more glider than boat,
ponderous in portage, weightless afloat.
Frail origami, vessel of air,
wide shallow saucer suspended where
shallows met shadows near the old dam.
Remember how it glowed like honey in summer
rubbed with beeswax and turpentine
against leaks, cracks, weather and time.
All your housekeeping went into that canoe,
then you rode high, bow lifted,
arced up like flight, all magic, power,
evening light. You j-stroking,
side-slipping, eddying out, frugal
with movement, all without effort,
just like you walked and ran.
I still see you rising from water to sky,
paddle held high,
river drops limning its edge.
Brown diamonds catch the light as you lift, then dip.
Parting the current, you slip
silently through the evening shadows.
You, birdsong, watersong, slanting light,
following river bend, swallowed from sight.