**Deer Stalker**

The sharp musk carried on the morning breeze

Warns me before I draw too close to touch.

I push the paddle forward as I pry

To parallel the thickly wooded shore,

And plant the paddle blade between the stones.

His browsing bothered by my bold approach,

He snorts, sharply exhaling, several times,

As if to blow the apparition clear

Of his lethargic gaze, as if it were

A cloud of black flies trying to alight

Upon the muzzle, buzzing off the rack,

Accustomed to no challenge from the lake.

I hold my breath to see how long he’ll stay,

Till gunwale bumping makes him bolt away.

**Woodsmoke**

Suspended in the canopy

Like Belgian lace,

A veil of spirits breath

Drawn back across the lake,

The dense incense of alder,

Of damp oak, decaying pine

And random pop of molten resin,

A fit fanfare for the day.

John F. Sherry, Jr.

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