

### **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.