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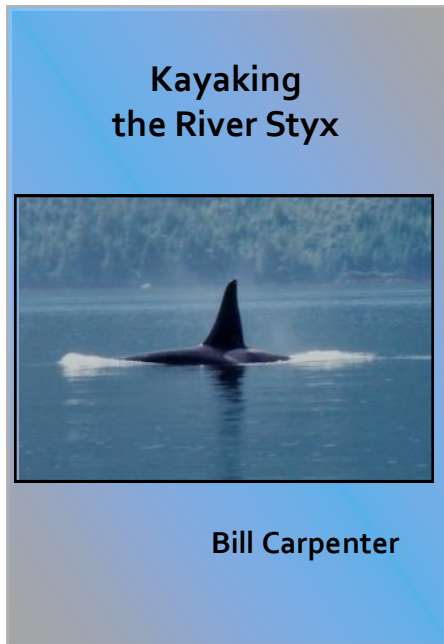
Origami Poetry Projects™

Cover photo: Bill Carpenter

Kayaking the River Styx

Bill Carpenter© 2014

Dream Time was published in a slightly different form in Tom Chandler's Poetic License



Dall's Porpoises

A small pod is feeding
along Johnston Strait
diving in circular arcs,
clock and counter clockwise,
their notched dorsal fins meshing
like so many gears
churning the sea.

They won't stay
to greet the Orcas,
known to torpedo dolphins
for sport, we spotted
a mile up shore.

Two dorsal fins
rip the surface,
each as large
as the keel
of a capsized sloop,
huffing thunderous exhales-

Humpft! Whoosh!
Humpft! Whoosh!

Then silence!
Till their silhouettes
resurface
several hundred yards
down Blackfish Sound.

Dream Time

Our kayak cuts through
the unevenly toned darkness,
wakes aglow
in bioluminescence,
each stroke
a green-white flame
below the black surface-
an aurora borealis
beneath the sea.
In this world,
of darting fish
and kelp beds
as thick as cables,
we shake stardust
into the depths.
It's dream time-
as we listen for blackfish,
imagining them surfacing
in brilliantly
illuminated auras.

Past Tense

It took me ten minutes or so,
to get the rhythm of rowing.
One oar slipped from its lock,
drifting ineffectively
like a broken flipper.
I watched you grow smaller
on the dock, as I relearned
a long unpracticed skill.
Pulled back in unison,
dipped my wrists, lifted,
and crossed fists to pull again.
Blind to where I was going,
as if stuck in a past tense,
only you for a distant guide.
My luggage in the stern,
a shifting ballast; as the bow
rose with each stroke
above a trailing wake.
A peculiar but familiar
way to travel, looking back
as I stumbled forward,
anticipating but never seeing
what's to come.

Palmer River

Along its tidal flat
an elongated tree dons
a cape woven from vine;
the hem flares
where tendrils reach
up its skeletal trunk.
On this grim day
it seems a reaper's cloak,
the hooded canopy
surrounding a dark visage
with a shriveled socket
that might have held an eye.
The figure brings shivers
as dusk draws cold breaths
along the tidal breach.
A sleeveless branch reaches
out from a shoulder,
curves upward
like a thin arm
wielding a scythe.

As I paddle by,
an osprey rises from its nest
behind the hood, where
its mate acts as sentry,
and circles,
halting death's countenance,
bowing in the wind
to let me pass.....
...as the bird gives a piercing cry,
the most beautiful buzzard
I ever saw.