

KATIE CANOEING AT NIGHT

Purple black trees
Straddle the river banks,
Dipping stray leaves, fallen branches.

Memory guides her
Leads her through dark water;
Her canoe fades in the distance behind us

We leave her to darkness;
The flickers of old fires
Old boats;

Echoes of the boys' guitars:
Half formed ghosts
On the banks at Lerryn,

The splash of leaping sea trout
Darting through the river surface.
She is searching;

Looking for spirits
Dipping her oars
Into hidden places;

She rows on
A steady rhythm;
Marking time, tracing moments

Past the china clay ships,
The fork to Lostwithiel,
Weaving through the moored up boats

Guided only by the flickering
Faraway light of stars
And a moon shrouded in cloud;

We wait for signs of her,
Lingering on the quay steps
At Polruan;

Searching the shadows
For a familiar shape,
A sound of her oars,

Her voice; a sign of hazy recognition
Emerging through
The blackened surface;

When finally she emerges,
Weary and blessed.

