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The Shaman's Craft

by

Joseph Murphy

I speak of a boat with a beak at its bow.

Its hull an oath churned from my drum's skin;
Decks caulked by song
Rising from the wreath within a mountain's tongue.

I raise a mast whittled from a root my kin
Pressed between my mother's teeth
As the birthing began.

Tonight, I graze the sky's banks
As branches burst from the husk of my keel.

Only a fool would think I lie at your feet
As a flame's bud opens through the stalk of my chest,
Seeds fall from my rudder's quill,
And a new moon's tentacles
Hone my oars.

Rolling and twisting,
I rise and weave through a conk shell's song:
The smashed bone of my cap
Hissing and wailing;
My spiked club
Jabbing at coiled shards.

To and fro, I rise from a star-chipped stream,
Rowing as I beat on the sail of my lungs;
As I scent from a wolf's snout;
Fixed in a puma's stare and stance,
Seeking that soul
I've been sent to find,
Seeking a cure.