

Wigtown Poetry Competition 2018

Main | Runner Up: Owen Lewis, *As if it didn't matter which way was home*

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As if it didn't matter which way was home

It was the long boat that arrives before living begins
that survives the flood.

(Not the boat that comes
after living, that moves into *the rolling fog*

and the *dear ones*, the ones being waved to,
have *already lost their faces*, the boat that absolves
the burdens of *all that caring*.) This is the boat

that loves the waters of earth and the earth
of earth, loves the gravel sound of beaching
under its hull happy to tip to its side

astride the forest, to let its kept animals back
onto the earth content to be taken apart
plank by plank, to be burned in a family hearth

or if pieces drift away they drift to drifting
across the blue seas, or the green, drift
to other uses or to none, or if it was

not a boat, it will be a train; it will be
a kind of transport only approximated here, it is
the coming before

before the going beyond.

(Recalling Stanley Kunitz's Long Boat)