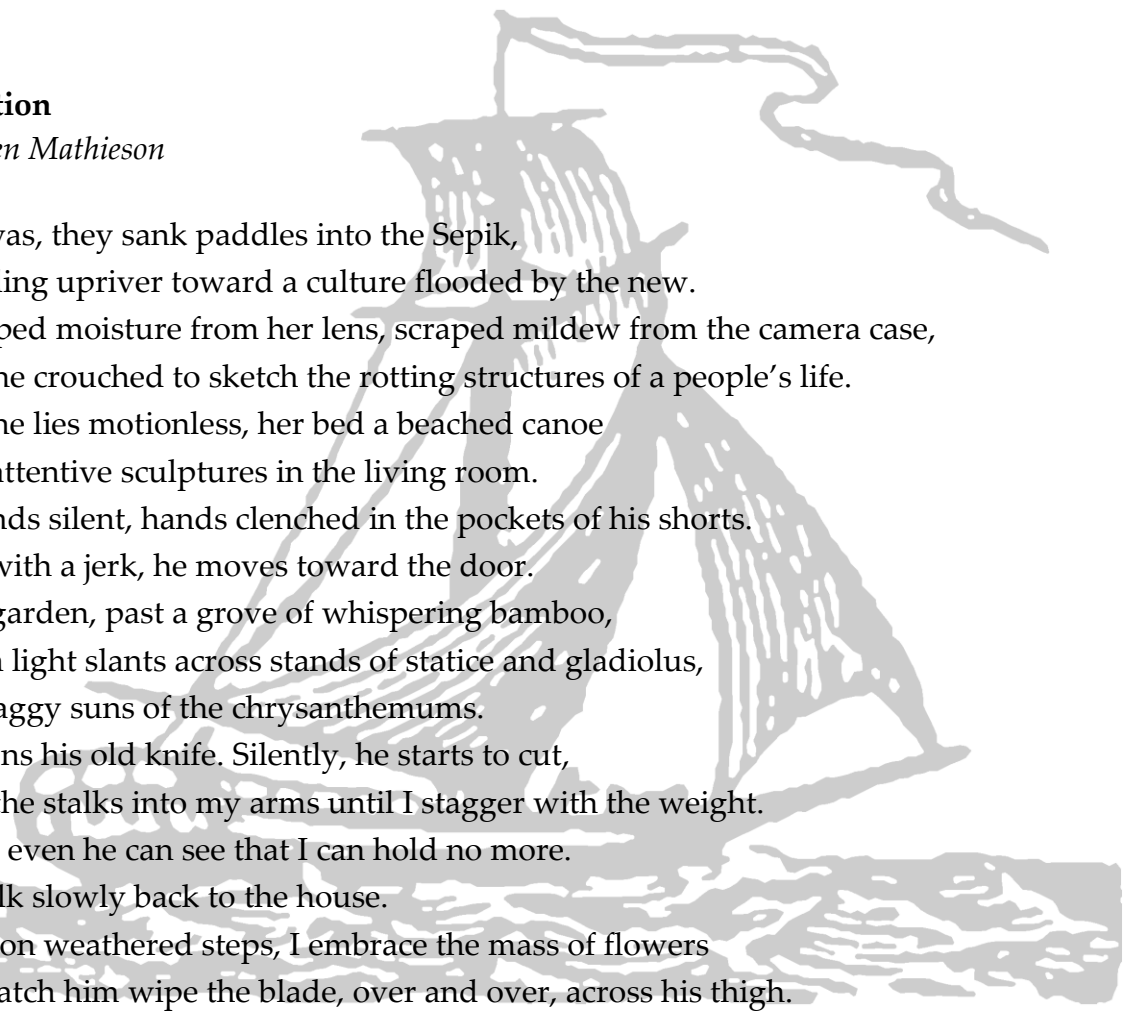




Karen Mathieson, Owner
Karen@SerendipityCommunications.com
Office line and voice mail: 503-297-3262
10940 SW Barnes Rd. #145 Portland OR 97225-5368

Transition

By Karen Mathieson



Time was, they sank paddles into the Sepik,
Struggling upriver toward a culture flooded by the new.
She wiped moisture from her lens, scraped mildew from the camera case,
While he crouched to sketch the rotting structures of a people's life.
Now she lies motionless, her bed a beached canoe
Amid attentive sculptures in the living room.
He stands silent, hands clenched in the pockets of his shorts.
Then, with a jerk, he moves toward the door.
In the garden, past a grove of whispering bamboo,
Golden light slants across stands of statice and gladiolus,
The shaggy suns of the chrysanthemums.
He opens his old knife. Silently, he starts to cut,
Piling the stalks into my arms until I stagger with the weight.
At last, even he can see that I can hold no more.
We walk slowly back to the house.
Sitting on weathered steps, I embrace the mass of flowers
And watch him wipe the blade, over and over, across his thigh.
He begins to speak of their marriage, and I hear the verbs
Slip downstream into the past.

© Karen Mathieson / Serendipity Communications

Please respect this original creation by not printing or otherwise widely distributing it without permission from the author.