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Upon the Water's Face

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Upon the Water's Face

Alma Lee Medley

1908–1997

My mother's last sister
sits in a worn, green rowboat
folding and refolding her hands.
They signal as
the boat moves out.
Our few words scatter
like little herds of waves.

She is drifting away,
her husband
thirty years ahead.
*Remember the picnics
on your big screened porch?
Even Uncle Tommy . . . , I begin.
Who are you?* she asks.

She is moving further out,
the wind is eating all our words.
Then I see it, a long brown
rope trailing the boat.
I reach out to draw her back,
but it is only a strand of moss
dissolving in my hands.