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Beautiful Lesson of the I

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RELIC DREAM

Wading in a shallow crook of the river,
pilgrims surround the relic raised on a palanquin—
*It's a fine piece of carved wood, oiled, perfumed,
full of weight, shaped roughly like a human foot
or phallus—*

*a wooden boat—that's how to bathe a god,
gently and solemnly, the way to bathe an infant,
for the first time in the object world.* But a boat
will drift over water, shoe-shaped, at the start of a journey,
float like a suitcase.