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.