

To Race the Rapids

Erik Kountz

As I propel myself in a kayak through the tight turns of the river,
The river becomes a tumbled torrent of water
As it tears and blasts from cataract to cataract
And thrashes and smashes from rock to rock.

I paddle fiercely to dodge each and every jagged rock
Which stabs into the sky.
The spiky rocks scrape my little kayak with a vengeance
I thought was reserved only for cat fights.

The river careens like a wild horse that can never be broken.
The bubbled foam on the river makes the rapids rage whiter
And my longing to navigate them all the stronger.
The water gushes and crashes as it races from rock to rock.
The spray splashes my face.
The waves buffet me from every side,
With only enough control to keep myself upright.

My ears pound as I hear the thunder of the waterfall that I approach quickly.
The rush and roar of its danger is soon upon me.
It's too late to change my mind or course
As my kayak and I plunge into the froth.

We cascade down from the drop
And rumble and tumble down the steep and slippery slope.
In a jet of pure power, water spurts and spouts,
As wave after wave of water rush to destroy
My kayak and me with untold force.

I am excited and a little scared
And my heart skips several beats as I fall through the air and mist,
And I smash the surface of the water at the base of the fall,
To plummet below into a calm underwater abyss.

I pop back to the surface and paddle downstream
As fast as the current flows.
My pulse slows slightly and I catch my breath.
I journey on: One down, three to go.