

The Three Boats

Brian Evenson

I.

And God came to me and shewed me
a boat on troubled waters.
"Shall you stretch forth your hand
to steady the vessel before it founders?"
"I shall," I said, and took the boat
in my hand and removed it from danger.

But it sailed forth again,
and was destroyed.

II.

I dived into the hurricane.
God came beneath me as I struggled and said,
"You must swim the breaststroke,"
and pressed my breast to his, lifting me.
His face cascaded over with water,
and I was taught, and could swim it.

I was rising from the water.
I was swimming athwart the waves.
I was running and could not be drowned.

III.

Porter shall be our boatman;
he shall collect the bullets
from our eyes and smelt coins
of them to pay our fare.

We have crossed the river into life,
but must cross back to die.
The boat must not go down.
Remove your boots. Bail.