

Watching Over

On a bank of the Fox where the river narrows
The great dark Potawatomi leans into the wind
Hunched in a rough robe of bronze
Cradling in one hand his cold calumet.
The People of the Fire have named him Ekwabet,
or Watching Over,
As if his solemn gaze and strong demeanor
Offered some protection to this city on the water.
Despite his stoical expression he is surely stunned
To wonder at the crowded world before him,
Lofty buildings of brick and stone,
Copper-topped pavilions, towers, arches and gazebos,
Throngs of people scurrying like ants along the avenues,
Traffic wheeling slowly over the Main Street bridge.
Who could blame him if he turned and cast a wistful look upstream,
But there'll be no going back,
his children's children gone the other way,
Just like his fathers' fathers,
all that water over the dam,
To foam and swirl like memory along the concrete piers and footings
Before continuing downstream.
And so loyal to the land, true to the river,
The Indian holds his pose and keeps his vigil
Over the home fires and the waters of the Fox.