Keeping Still

Sound travels best over water
and through darkness. Exactly
like fear.

   Beside the lake on a night
with no moon the loon cries,
the chorusing frogs
shrilled in our ears, then
went so suddenly still the silence
startled us.

   Punctuating that stillness,
the faint rhythmic sounds of quiet oars – not
splash-and-lift, this oarsman
handled his boat so noiselessly we heard
only the small click of oars
in their locks, a sound he could soften
but not stifle unless he shipped his oars.
Which he did for awhile.

   Before the frogs
trusted his silence, we heard again
that almost-inaudible click
of someone rowing as near to absolute
silence as he could. We sat a long time
wondering who
on that waiting expanse of water
didn’t want us to know
he was there.

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