

Hearken · *James Paul*

Maybe you are rowing under the bridge
When the honeymooners' car goes over,
And the hastily-tied knots holding
The suitcase to the rack finally slip:
The bag splits on the railing above you
And explodes into a cloud of tropical clothing,
Bright underwear, the stuff spinning, snapping,
Then relinquishing the wind for the water.
And after all this you look humbly around,

Sure the bounty of this moment was meant
For others, but as it happens you're alone
On the river, and you know this is as close
As you'll ever get to special consideration.
Near you the flowers bloom a moment, then
Submit to the surface, and on the slope
Rising out of the valley, the car climbs away.
Your boat too starts downstream as you pause
At the oars, everything fading to the story
You'll tell, until you might as well have lied.