

## Obol

Ferry crossing, mid-river,  
and on a downstream shore  
A man is burning what

looks like leaves and brush.  
Through the fog and smoke  
I can almost make him out;

parka, wool toque, armfuls  
of spring culls, wind-fall  
from winter storms, hunched

figure in a Hiroshige woodcut.  
He stokes the fire, straightens  
up, vanishes, returns with more.

As the boat pitches forward  
against wind and water  
he grows smaller and smaller

until all I can see; a floating  
world, the spruce forest's misted  
spires, the conflagration's

blue-black smoke. When we dock  
on the opposite shore, I slip a coin  
from my tongue, toss to the ferryman,

marvel out loud how my lungs  
are clear, my fever's broke.  
In the distance, a dog barks—

I haven't breathed this free in months.

*Lisa McCabe reads and writes in Lahave, Nova Scotia, Canada.*

~ \*♦\*❁\*♦\* ~

*The Pangolin Review, Covid-19 Issue (April, 2020)*