

The Migration

(After a photograph of a carving, by Joe Talirunili, of the same title)

Eskimos close-packed in an open boat,
a family, perhaps more, The People.
On either side three oarsmen.

Aft, the steersman, seated. At the centre,
standing, facing ahead,
a man who tends the single sail.

In the bow, the harpoonist, his body arching
forward like a bow, his weapon
pointing them forward, a compass arrow,

his arm aloft, taut in the moment
before release. The photographer
has set them against a backdrop

of depthless blue light, which is sea,
which is sky, which is infinity.
There is no horizon. They are moving, still

they are moving but rooted, they grow together
out of the one stone. Home
is the boat, is wherever they have left, wherever

they will reach or not reach. They are one, moving
Art within art within art:
a lump of stone, a shutter click,
this frail freighted vessel of words.

EDWARD BAUGH