

# When I First Stepped in a Canoe

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When I first stepped in a canoe  
I made a fatal mistake  
I planted my heel one side of the keel  
And pitched head-first in the lake  
I had no reason to think  
It would tip before you could blink  
And take all your talents for  
Keeping your balance or  
Else you'd land in the drink  
Which is what I proceeded to do  
When I first stepped in a canoe.

When I first soloed in a canoe  
It took me a while to learn  
That you sit in the bow (though I didn't know how  
You could tell the damn thing from the stern)  
I paddled the rest of the day  
In circles and growing dismay  
I hadn't a clue  
That to steer the thing true  
Your stroke had to end with a 'J'  
Which no one had taught me to do  
When I first soloed in a canoe.

When I first kneel in a canoe  
I paddle with languorous grace  
But it's all a mirage when you have to portage  
With blackflies eating your face  
As I stagger off into the trees  
At least I am off of my knees  
Which I haven't quite felt  
Since the minute I knelt  
And my kneecaps turned into cheese  
Which is what they instantly do  
When I first kneel in a canoe.

Now, the best thing about a canoe  
May be just what it is not  
Like loud and aggressive and big and excessive  
Like a ski boat or millionaire's yacht  
It's at home on lake, stream, or chute  
It won't harm a beaver or coot  
It may take some labour  
But like a good neighbour  
It won't make noise or pollute  
So when asked if you want a Sea Doo  
Say, "Thanks, but I'd rather canoe."

Now it's time to skedaddle  
(God, I wish these had a saddle)  
And paddle off in my canoe.