

Alan MacDougall

QUIET MAN

When symbols are calm
when they are really meaningful,
the pulse slow
 the dying jet trail
 on the horizon
 incandescent pink,
the birds caught up
 in the stillness,
the wind holding its breath,
 the water easing
 along the side
 barely audible,
 everything spreading out
 into darkening pastel,
the first lights going on
 from companion ships
 out across the miles--

Then it all stands up
and everything cries out
for work,
for a quiet man, known
only as the Bosun,
 who knows.