

SO CLOSE I COULD HAVE TOUCHED IT

We were sitting in the morning sun:
i was reading a story by David Duncan
to my wife, who was knitting, our dog,
a sighthound, natural-born killer, at her feet,
when the duck waddled up the angled granite slab
from the lake and settled in only a few feet away.

The duck, the dog, the wife, all listened
as Mr. Duncan described how
he came to have an invisible, Islamic fishing guide;
al-Khizir, the Green One, a.k.a. Kwaja Khadir,
Guardian of Eternity's waters:

One day, fishing, in a state of bliss,
gasping with gratitude for all of creation,
Mr. Duncan offered the use of his body
(and all the rest of his fishing gear)
so that Kwaja could, if he would like,
experience the particular joy of flyfishing.
He made this offer aloud,
calling on the Green One by name.

When he heard the name,
Mr. Duck, heretofore silent,
offered one, and one only,
loud,
 clear,
 quack;
rose,
 and with dignity
 descended to the lake.