**The Class on the Charles**

**By Anna Buttner**

Filtered light exposes fragments of our bodies as we walk the path by the river,

the flux of leaves in the breeze. Their silhouettes ripple on our clothes and limbs.

The water dark with white dimpling crescents,

a blurred, moving image of the sun and clouds floats on its surface.

Ducks sail, feathered boats in formation, at the edge of river and land.

The teacher points out the weeping willow that has risen

from its dead stump, to prove to the observer the meaning of resiliency.

Our aim, to catch the Fall light along the river,

pictures saved of the day as if we are children saving colored leaves

between wax paper.

The young woman pauses, as focused as her camera,

crouched, to catch exactly the shot in her imagination,

aware of the discrepancy, the boundary between artist and subject.

The retired clinician bounces along, a bright smile on his face,

studying outer shadows, back light, color, spacial relationships

after decades of exploring inner shadows, muted, shifting colors of mental play,

translucent fantasy, butterfly wings of thought.

The teacher stops to ask a woman feeding her baby if he can take her picture.

He is a tall man, he strides through the alley between the corridors of trees,

twisting avenues of vines and shrubs.

The charcoal weight of the trees is heavy, shifting, imbalanced darkness.

Leaves are caressed with pastel color,

temperate oranges, ochres, and reds mix with the myriad greens,

delicate yellows upon the canvass of early fall.

A heron sits on a branch in the middle of the river, near a bend.

Bridges, the color of soft gray feathers, offer a view of glittering ripples

colored weeds, both allegiances of the river.

I play with my shutter speeds, the camera refusing to let me

escape my ignorance,

as if it knows I must study hard to let it impart its secrets to me.

Reveal the kaleidoscope image inside. The world captured in a leaf.