

Boatbuilder*

by Janie Meneely

Shapes the wood with calloused hands as tough as knotty pine
Lays the planks against the frame one strake at a time
Sands and planes and paints 'er up, always one more coat
Before another month was out, he'll launch another boat

CHORUS:

Skipjack or a sharpie; catboat or canoe
For working or for pleasure there's nothing he can't do
Skiff, a launch, a deadrise; brogan or bateau
He'll build them all by rack of eye, and Lordy-watch 'em go!

His workshop smells like turpentine, his jacket smells the worse
He'll run gnarled fingers through his beard, he'll hawk and spit and curse
But when it comes to building boats, there's none can speak him ill
And there's nothing on the water like the boats that he could build

CHORUS

His father trained him for the trade, right in his grandad's shop
Three generations come and gone, can't count the boats they launched
But his own son and grandson, well, they're handy with the tools
One's an uptown lawyer and the other's off at school

CHORUS

The yard is kinda quiet now, all the orders have been filled
He'll finish out a hull or two just to pay the bills
But every night at closing time the boys'll stop on by
Slap a six-pack on the bench and swap another lie

CHORUS

CHORUS

*this is an updated version, with a slight variation in the third verse