

Future City on the Detroit River: Thomas Smith, 18th Century Surveyor
By Marty Gervais, *City of Windsor's Poet Laureate*

He loved the light –
it made the darkness glow
on those nights when he scrambled
down the embankment
to the birch canoe

summer moon high above
its face swimming
in the wide sweep of the river below –
a paddle in the darkness
breaking the silence
burning fires along
the shore, noise of daytime
raging in his head
among rigid visions of roads
and buildings and traders
and farmers

In that moment returning
to the south shore at Petite Côte
he dreamt of home, the River Wye
its torrent through the valley
in early spring
his youthful mind swarming
with drawings of old streets
imagining the noise of day
of people with purpose
but now here along this river
there was only his canoe
in the swift current of darkness
that took him back –
a compass, a set
of plotting instruments
and the stiff rolled up drawings
in a leather portfolio
and secrets emerging
in the inked geometry
of avenues not yet known

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