

Dragonfly

Your lineage is as old as coal,
your life, in the swirl of stars,
a twitch of plasma on a reed.

Rafting the Zambezi river,
I saw your filigree shimmer
on a boulder's bulky sphinx.

The raft had spun in an eddy,
bumped the wall of a gorge
and grounded on a rock-spur.

I was glad to rest. Upstream,
a vortex in the slide of green
had slid the raft to its crest,

lifted the stern high in the air
then hurled me from my bench
into a roaring, spinning hole.

For a whole eternity of panic
I'd suffocated in a Charybdis,
feeling certain that I'd drown.

How greedily then I registered
the powdery, glistening bands
of crimson around your back,

each wingtip's lunette of blue.
I dipped a finger in the river
and on the hot, eroded granite

I wrote my name in water.
Before I'd streaked the last letter,
you and the writing had gone.