

MY PURPOSE IN LIFE

—inspired by Mary Cassatt, *Summertime*, 1894

All I want to do is drift in a rowboat,
nudged by light,
where my mind takes me
through slight rocking waves
caused by ducks paddling nearby
as I toss breadcrumbs—

how careless of me
to let my hand go limp
into the river,
my finger stirring memory,

reflections
of tree leaves and silence—

how carefree of me
making the silence
hush,
breath barely rowing
summer
from one shore to another—

even a white flower opening
creates more noise, even
ducks rustling wings
bob and breaking the water's surface
has more purpose than
my limp oars
never rowing across the silence,

my hands, too tired to paint
the sun splashing
across summer days—

I could spend all my life drifting,
never talking, all the time being still,
my fingers barely touching water,
to see if I could feel anything
other than bliss.

—Martin Willitts Jr.