**The Boat’s Last Patrol**

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winter of ‘44

the USS Menhaden

enters Lake Michigan waters

to menace a Rising Sun

like salmon fry, salt water is destiny

floating down the ever widening

 Mississippi muddy waters

past St. Louis, Cape Girardeau, Cairo,

 Natchez and New Orleans

never to return

cruise to Pearl Harbor

join the fight

never meant to be

cut short by Little Boy’s blinding,

 incinerating heat

in a flash, The Boat is destined

 to endless Cold War posturing

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The Boat’s last patrol sails to Pearl,

 American Samoa, New Zealand,

 Tahiti and back to San Diego

dubbed LongEx ‘70 – war games

 between foreign friendly forces

but first, Pearl’s dive tower

 submariners must test

packed like rats aboard a sunken sub

anxiety reigns supreme

Steinke Hoods donned and minds focused

one-by-one they surface

to patrol another day

submerged beneath New Zealand coastal waters

The Boat plays cat and mouse with New Zealand

 French and Australian war ships

enemy depth charges go BANG!

you’re hit

you’re dead

 \* \* \*

another patrol

never meant to be

painted yellow

used for target practice

accidental sinking in ‘88

died a salmon’s death – beat, spent, scavenged

only to return as ploughshares, tin cans,

 Fords and Chevys

tossed upon the shards of history

was always meant to be