I remember the dragon boats on the river, the detonations of fireworks, the beating drums. It was tribal. It was like war as the sweating boatcrews strove to defeat each other on that dark green glittering trench between festive phalanxes on the banks.

And after each stretch of river traversed, amid the fierce thunder, then on a stroke the glistening rowers rose as one from their seats and turned. Then facing the other way crouched and dug deep their stiff paddles once more. Eyes fixed ahead in victory trance.

There are moments in all lives when the dragon’s breathing fire catches in our own throats. Bodies are narrow boats on festive streams and the rower plunges each deep stroke. Eyes are fixed to where the shine on the river’s form dazzles and then the dragon roars.