

**Dinghy Racing on Dam Flask**  
**By Shelagh Woolliscroft, April 2024**

The wind finds its way  
Over and between the hills,  
Spreading across the water  
Like a cat's paw.

The gun fires - three minutes to go.  
We beat up and down the starting line  
With thirty other boats,  
Silently competitive.  
All seeking the best position  
Sails flap, halyards twang against aluminium masts  
Two boats collide to jointly muttered oaths.

Then the wind changes.  
Anxious shouts snatch the air.  
Calls of 'starboard' and 'jib in'.  
Boats tack and roll, masts dip, all is chaos.  
Peewit is over the line  
And must circle for her sins.

A second shot: time to go!  
Some boats catch the wind and are off like birds  
Towards the first marker buoy.  
The rest lose way, tack, tack again and swear.  
More collisions: one boat heads, wounded, for the shore.

The wind takes pity. Sails fill,  
Spirits lift and all are away.  
Wind, water and wood:  
A triumph of man with nature.  
No need for oil in this heaven.