"Steep"
a poem inspired by Julie Allinson's painting, *Moonrise over Back Creek, Solomons*
by Jeff Smallwood

Cratered thoughts persuaded to kindness

by the tide of purple water

and we wade

waist deep in wait

This is no ordinary immersion

it is a cleansing brew

steeping in the back creek

as moths bow in reverence

Spring blossoms dimple this nighttime infusion

to ferry our conceits through secret portals

where her surfaces await if only

we remembered how to follow

When midnight rose and

morning glory finally embrace

those first warming notes will ask

if she is rising or setting

Only our collective held breath

can hear her reply

inhaled through a sip in the clouds

a honeyed yes