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Cleat

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Cleat

for Don Justin Meserve (1938-2010)

The word makes me think of Boyer,
third baseman of my boyhood,
of the bottom of a soccer shoe,
of old England, and then

I find Don riding the thing
on his website, half cowboy,
half Doctor Strangelove
and realize we're talking

nautical: "a fitting on ships,
boats and docks to which
ropes are tied," one of those
utilitarian designs

that become graceful sculpture
when carved from downeast granite
by master rock man Meserve
late of Round Pond, Maine.

The cleat he rides resembles
small snub-nose kayak,
Inuit but also anvil,
the sculptor waving cap

not really a rodeo gesture
but a farewell to the crowd,
Don just months away
from death, but his piece

anchored in Winter Harbor
tames the tide, mighty
cleat we can all count on
when our ship comes in

or doesn't, its simple shape
holding the horizon,
rising and falling according
to the moon and Meserve

riding into the sunset.