

An Island in the River

Πάντων ἀρχὴ τὸ ὕδωρ.

Pantōn arche to hydōr.

Water is the beginning of all things.

—Thales

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An Island in the River

This was the last time
he would stand on the bridge
over the river.

They were taking him away
because he had fallen
and could not get up
on his own.

He would go, never again
to be the man he was.

Better, he thought,
to fall in the river
that roared with the flood
that came in the spring.

They found him later
shored up on an island
that had long stood
against the river's time.

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The End of Desire

On the shore the children
throw stones to test
their strength.
No one wins.
A mountain hovers
over the river, a ribbon
of light. There is only
the silent splash of stone.

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The Old Die Young

Her eyes run to rivers,
then the moon,
still a child.

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River Run

The poet's way
begins in the mountains,
runs through forest
and desert, turning
stones into words.

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Though I can
no longer walk
a mile,
my eyes and ears
travel far
and bring back news
of waves
of mountains,
rivers running
deep and cold.

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A gust of wind
prompts me to sing.
I have no words,
but I can flow
like a choir.

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Mountains are best seen
upside down
in a river
where they dance.

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I am the river you drift upon
A father falls, a child is born, a mother's love

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Maybe Daphne

On the run, she
begs the river
to root his feet
to the ground.

Now she wears
his laurels
for a crown
and dares you
to catch her,
if you can.

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To Hunt the Whale

*de quo consultus, an esset tempora maturae visurus longa senectae, fatidicus
vates "si se non noverit" inquit.*

("When asked whether he would see the long years of ripe old age, the prophetic seer said, 'If he does not come to know himself.'" Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Bk. 3, 348-350. These lines refer to the prophecy given by the seer Tiresias regarding the fate of Narcissus.)

Everywhere there are mirrors
in trees and wind,
in river and stream
and, yes,
in your tears.

We are Narcissus,
enchanted by water.
it is the whale
hunting you.

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River Notes

As I sit here writing
at my desk,
I am on the river.
The sounds of water,
bird, and wind
are my voice.

Luna puella,
there you are,
your body curving
and folding
in the current

•

The Fall

He fell (he was always falling)
Or rather, he jumped, missing the water
That would have taken him, leaving his remains
To flow in the rhythms of his speech,
Washed clean like one hoping to please
Instead of what was, a silent heap.