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The Baptism

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Walter Barga

THE BAPTISM

Years later when he mentions crucified by water,
he's referring to his house flooded two years running:
uprisings of river, voluminous snowmelt and spring
rain, leveling the valley, making it one long

muddy way. A continuous waist-high stain
along living room walls and storefront windows.
Seasons turning and it can't be the same river
according to Heraclitus,

even if it rushes from mountain and sky's
single infinite slope. All the water
that will ever exist on earth is already here.
What's not visible is pumped from ancient

aquifers, leaving extinct beasts thirsty.
If this is every last drop, all rivers are the same,
leaving Heraclitus all wet.
This man's water-logged house hasn't moved.

He declares he'll drift nowhere else.
He finds remnants of different valleys,
in the flow of his living room.
He wades knee deep in strange lands.