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Water Music

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**Water Music**

Gnats orbit my face as we float on our backs in the brown river, eyes closed or half-closed to the sun and building thunderheads. We are trying to recover our luck by surrendering our bodies to the current. A current runs through everything, yes, but here it is explicit—we are far from the clean black beetles that do authority's bidding, far from the toxicity of bank loans. All we have is this chaos in our hearts. And water trickling over the mossy lip of the dam down there as surely as money, or love, making an inhuman music on the jumbled rocks below. A big turquoise dragonfly lights on a floating twig, freezes: it flexes its four wings so slowly I fall further into the world of dreaming. I think this may be one of those rare moments of transcendence. Don’t you believe it. The dragonfly, though beautiful, is as inhuman as a jewel; its carapace is hard, its eyes compound—it must see in clicks and segments what we see as smooth and round; a live mineral, it needs this water to perpetuate its ancient genes, which we do on dry land, calling it by other names. In love, we say, somehow
wrapping our brittle bones around
each other, swimming toward that music
neither of us understands. Music
like the jeweled clockwork
of the sun-drenched dragonfly’s
four perfect wings that flex the light.
There is no secret in that light,
no matter how beautiful, how full.

**Dog Years**

Well, in a hundred years when
an army of blind crows scratches
with scarred claws in the duff
at the edge of the browning woods
by the river; when new grasses
tough as knotted rope have grown
that have never heard
the historical whisper of languages
and the religions spawned thereby;
when old trout burn
huge and muscular near the bottom
of the drunken river from which lush
weeds coil;

when no hammer blows
fall like cold syllables in the heart
of the village to ring the spring air
and prick up the ears of old dogs
sweltering on our porches;
when our dogs twitch their fine noses
at the acrid combinations
of leaf smoke and the cold burnings
of fungus;

when it is all over
for us, even in this rural paradise