

Stream

Megham Purvis

I know this walk, as well as I know the river at its end:
a jolting downhill of uneven sidewalks and back streets.

I learned each block's length, each zebra crossing
until now I walk barely seeing, knowing as I reach the
water

that this place is for me. This spot, where the branches
graze the water at high tide, had a helmet fished out of it
eight years ago,

iron with coned points, a reminder of the Vikings that
sailed the Thames,
that they still lie buried in its impenetrable, wide water.

I've added my own humble artifacts to its rushing,
a fumbled, new-born heathenism: Please, just let me stay.

Brigid hear my thoughts as they rise. India ink on white
pressed paper,
plush against my fingers, like part of my own hand.
I dream

of jumping the low brick wall, boosted by the cement
benches,
and plunging into it, fingers wide and palms down,

letting it fill my eyes, my mouth, seeping in like lost
blood

until I can rise without swimming and walk

with my body of it, of the grass I step in and the
branches

I use to pull myself out, being everything I touch:

this final learning, this only immanence,
of flowing north and feeling the muscles in my legs pull

through Whitehall and Trafalgar, towards the
Restoration brick
of Gower Street, and saying to every crossroads, every
building

and the dark, breathing earth beneath it: I know you.
We are each other's roots and I feel you grow.