

After the rain

for Michael Lynn

In Plum Creek, last night's rainfall
plunges toward Black River.
On the water, feathery inflections
join and separate, and join again.
Branches, stones and clay
nudge the current as it rushes past.
Reeds bend with the force,
fish beat hard against the flow,
and frogs dig deep to hold their own.

In the early morning, a walker passes by,
crosses the stream on a fallen ash,
follows the bank, his boots soaked,
abstracted, meshed in thought.
What can I know of this, he asks
the rush of waters, the pull
of gravity, the intricate braids
of rivulets, the creatures
whose lives depend on all this energy?

Just beyond the Pyle Road bridge,
a weir holds the waters back
in a swirl, a momentary circling
before the waters push on down.
Pausing there, on that drier ground,
the walker sees on the sodden bank
a young great blue, its long neck elegant,
its eyes attentive to...what? A frog,
perhaps, unwarily displaced by flood.

And now the walker stands still,
simply watching the young heron,
who, he imagines, holds itself still
to lure the frog to make a move.
A moment of observational clarity,
he notes: but then, what can I really know?
 attend ever so closely, consult
the books of natural history, still
I know so little.

Well, let it simply be, he thinks.
Of course, there's nothing simple about it;
but we need to make it *seem* so: as when a musician
learns a piece, parses its intricacies,
clarifies the interconnections, finds the rush
and stillness of the phrases, refines
the complexity to its essentials;
yet always, even on stage, knows
that it is something he can never simply know.

-- Nicholas Jones
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