

*Patricia Crane*

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## Failing to Find the Hudson

Where's the river, you field of weed-choked Christmas trees?  
You red sumac drupes clashing with your pink-orange foliage.  
You sky with your high drama. You crushed foam cup,  
Pepsi can, Sunny Delite bottle on the roadside.  
You leaf-plastered white plastic lawn chairs.  
Where's the river, Ralph's Country Realty?  
Where's the Hudson, Mrs. Sew and Sew?  
I should've taken a right back there. Now my momentum's  
lost, now huge teardrops on the windshield, the wind  
whipping those willows, the willows shaking their heads  
no and no and no to my longing for river, the sky  
saying rain is enough, the road saying Welcome to Clermont:  
home of grazing horses, pumpkins on doorsteps,  
Stop the Plant signs. Home of the river my spirit  
hungers for, water dark and deep and cold  
running under everything—this chainlink choked with phragmites,  
these power lines stitching a leaf-lit hill,  
that redbtail slow-flapping over a billboard: *Suzuki,*  
*Best Buy in America.* Nothing here but roadkill,  
the dotted yellow line, trap rock on a scoured hillside.  
Where's the river dark and deep and cold running  
over every ageless thing—stones, mud, the ageless murk—  
rewriting its history again and again, diminishing  
nothing, everything that enters its waters made holy,  
or if not holy, then whole. Or more whole. Even a blown-out tire.  
Even a half-submerged shopping cart bleeding rust. Even  
my feet, if only they could find their way there, somewhere  
near this home of sunflowers leaning on a split-rail fence,

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heads bent under the weight of tomorrow. Home of 9G South  
and Bubby's Burrito Stand where I turn river desire  
into another hunger: a rice and bean with guacamole.  
The lettuce and tomato fresh, the guac so lemon-limey  
it hurts my ears, the chipotle sauce, a smoky-hot cactus spine  
tingle that stains my lips greasy red. Best burrito  
but I can't finish it, chuck its beiges, greens and red-browns  
into a chicken-wire bin with lime rinds, lemon rinds,  
avocado shells galore, all the colors of a Mexican blanket,  
of a river in fall, darker the deeper down it goes,  
all the way down to black oil river dark, running deep  
and cold all the way to the first and last darkness.

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