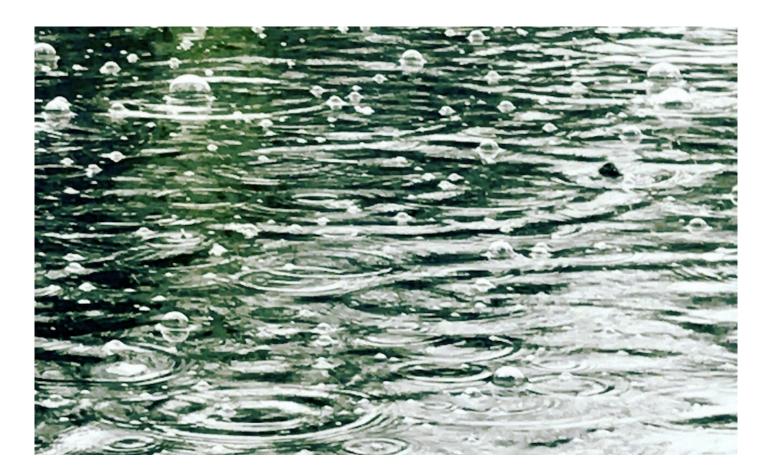# High Winds Write the Tides [1]

April 16, 2018   Featured Poetry [2]
Science and Society [3]
Nature [4]

Poem by Tiffany Higgins

When Rains

with rains,
        mist crawls
    up a crevice
 between
    green breasts

        like a howler monkey extending
                its gray length
            above the canopy

            like the fairy godmother

lowering her
shawl down
to the alone stepdaughter

with rains,
the Sierras swell
with snowpack

with rains,
farmers'
wells
fill

with rains,
high winds
write
the tides

with rains,
   grateful tongues
of grass
   spell
      the hill

after five years
   of none,
one month of
      torrents

she glides
her measure

| amber acre | her curves | the driver | eyes |
| now emerald | seduce | to loll | upward |

who was the one	our wide valley	until we/they routed	
who gleamed?	once was marsh	sedges and peoples	
		out	

only if you listen	that ever		
there is a song	wings		
		yet in	
		it	
			lore
			of suffering

| you bend | to knead | flush | |
| a knee | the soil | with stories | |

| someone once | who was and | drain | drown… |
| lived in between | cannot ever be | drain | |

In Oroville,
once Maidu land

(some yet
remain)

the nation's
tallest dam

prevents
the Feather
River

as it falls from
Las Plumas

down to
the Yuba
and Bear rivers

once Chinook
salmon
steelhead trout

swam up the
Feather

now can't climb

to spawn
and sprout

full rains pound
the embankment

all the waters
you'd prayed for

press

pour

into the over-
flow

channel
churn

surge
over its lip

slosh
into the earthen

slope

storm-soaked it

tumbles

forms caves

which if
they increase

could pierce

through

to the
lake

in a rush
men quarry

boulders
three tons

to plug
gaps

whirl
in slurry

hundreds of
thousands

evacuate

Sacramento
shelters

those
who flee

to harbor

is to

give

way

cliffs give in

to
slides

freeways

sag

root-crowns   laden   grow   soggy

the sub   soil   streams

in my city I wake   the lissome
surface   below the engine   in the night
has borne
excavations

a row of pits   where wheels
would be

reveal
red-

brown dirt

carnelian caves   wrest
a past   from cement

we swerve   a course   to not   fall in

no one   rushes   to repair   them

the shipwreck tilts   takes on water   we raise our shins   and wade

the sink spreads   pervades   its lowing   gradient

as the child   tugs   a sleeve

into   the   grave

Art Information

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Tiffany Higgins is a writer, translator, and poet. She is the author of *The Apparition at Fort Bragg* [5] (2016), which was an *Iron Horse Literary Review* contest winner. She's also the author of *And Aeneas Stares into Her Helmet* [6] (2009) and *Tail of the Whale* [7] (Toad Press, 2016), a translation of the Portuguese by Alice Sant'Anna. Her poems appear in *Poetry* [8], *Kenyon Review*, *Ghost Fishing* [9], and elsewhere. Currently, she's translating writers from Bahia, Brazil, including Itamar Vieira Junior. Her article, "Brazil's Munduruku Mark out Their Territory When the Government Won't," is forthcoming in *Granta* [10].

For more information, follow Tiffany Higgins on Twitter @tiff_higgins [11].

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