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

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

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
now emerald

her curves
seduce

the driver
to loll

eyes
upward

who was the one
who gleamed?

our wide valley
once was marsh

until we/they routed
sedges and peoples
out

only if you listen
there is a song

that ever
wings

yet in
it

lore
of suffering

you bend
a knee

to knead
the soil

flush
with stories

someone once
lived in between

who was and
cannot ever be

drain
drain

drown…

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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

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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

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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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