

September 23, 2017 | Bowens Island, South Carolina

Each river, great or small, is a sum of lulls and rushes,
of breaks and bends that drift us farther from our home
just to route us back again on rapids roiling and alive
with the faces we love most, with the timeless scenes

of our becoming. There, in Nevada City, a first glance
between a lean octopus and a pregnant girl. There,
years later, a sun-splashed yard in a rainy city, their eyes
now glowing in the promise of that glance. There

she orders whiskey and a pound of barbeque
and he swoons, and when he uncaps a lager
with a lighter she ticks an entry off her husband list,
leaving only items such as courage, loyalty, and kindness

which she will soon check, too, when she sees him
fishing with her daughter and speaking up with fire
in endless courtrooms. And he will find an artist, guide,
healer, and mother revealed in time before him,

each unwrapped and sparkling layer like an impossible gift,
and marvel at her poise when (accidentally) pepper sprayed,
as each of their own rivers drifts distantly away and back
while inching to a confluence in California. There

the route winds them all together on an adventure
through the pinot vines, from planted clue to clue, the last
revealing a rabbit-fur pouch, an heirloom diamond ring
and two scribbled words to echo on forever: Joy and Love.

By nature rivers fray and fork and rarely reunite, but today
two wayward branches sought and found each other
amongst the salty pilings of a Carolina marsh. Up above

a simple shack will bear witness to the simplest of tasks:
the promise to be good, to love and accept love in return.
The promise to carry the other with us, on the rivers, on the roads,

through the dirt and water and sunshine of this life – and when
we must part from time to time, the promise to always find an eddy
in our great shared river and wait for the other to return.

