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## South on the Eel River

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## *South on the Eel River*

*for J.B.*

1

We map the veins of riverstones,  
gently poking skeletons of a mountain  
that once rose here,  
each white bone a tooth  
in the river's history,  
the furious current curving,  
pivoting from the root,  
the river's green roar  
promising the sea.

2

Ninety miles inland  
cacti push up from rock-soil.  
We share what light slips  
between manzanita leaves,  
listening to the tree's inner chambers where  
blind blood seeps upward from  
dark root-hairs.

We drink wine,  
dream about this manzanita's  
mahogany skin.

3

On a moonswept hill, thick grass  
pulls on the river's song.  
Stones beneath the field speak  
of the long sinking,  
of rising with the frost.  
We are among them—  
footsteps, thin  
shadows, particles of clay.