

Changing in Midstream

Leaving the Peabody this wet Sunday morning,
My tires hiss like spider spinnerets
Weaving Beale, Gayoso, and Union Streets
Into Riverside Drive.

I gaze wistfully at Mud Island
Where Friday night and all Sabbath afternoon
We listened to black musicians
Carve niches in the sky's cathedral-like facade,
Enshrining harmonies for us to hum
Whenever revisiting this Jordan
In which our passions were baptized for life.

Mesmerized, I approach the span
I-55 traverses
Sojourning between Tennessee and Arkansas.
Recalling your futile maneuvers
To forestall our separation
With lovemaking in the strictly Southern style
Causes me to balk like a fractious mule
Sensing a snake in tall grass.
Grief-stricken, growing irrational,
Disregarding traffic,
I halt my car at the bridge's dead centre

And shout out my window phrases you spoke
In your slow, whisperous Mississippi dialect
That yet echo in Memory's baffles,
Amplified by this unlikely impasse:
"98% water,
Our bodies sail on their own oceans."
"We're vessels tied to our tides."
"Bon voyage, my dear, handsome man."
I dive into your voice,
And, buoyed by its siren-call drawl,
Float upstream all the way to St. Louis.

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