

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 11
Number 2 *Arcade*

Article 9

Spring 5-1-1992

The River's The Place To Be

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Recommended Citation

Grush, Olga (1992) "The River's The Place To Be," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 11 : No. 2 , Article 9.
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol11/iss2/9>

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The River's The Place To Be

Olga Grush

Easy current slows my boat past occult swamps,
hushed water of unplumbed deepsleep terrors,
of catfish napping below the sudden quiver
of telltale hiding places of whiskered jaws.
It's here I practice wizardry in dimity air
stitched blue by dragonflies, and half afraid,
I cast a whirring line with swish of wrist,
silk whispering sibilant warnings downstream
a mile, it seems, to barmy bubbles that rise
and break in yeasty spittle of slippery frogs.
And sleepily moored in buoys of reeds I watch
the scatter patterned carapaces of turtles
as scary as unpredictable water moccasins.
Yet, I have no fear of things submerged,
of things invisible. I have deliverance
in soothing requiems of mourning doves
and wisdom in morse codes of woodpeckers.
But when the catfish hits, lip-hooked,
rod-bending, and thrashes up and pitches
with overwhelming pull--diving, sculling
out of its poachy morass, then disappears,
I learn everything the catfish knows.
I will wave the white flag of silence
as sunrise sounds my knell of time.
I know the river's the place to be.