

8-1-2004

Confluence

Janisse Ray

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/yr>

Recommended Citation

Ray, Janisse (2004) "Confluence," *Yalobusha Review*. Vol. 9 , Article 14.
Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/yr/vol9/iss1/14>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the English at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yalobusha Review by an authorized editor of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Janisse Ray

Confluence

To find you, I combed heaven and earth
barefoot across blistering sand dunes,
through gnarled wind-forest.
Through meadows, thickets and gardens
I went looking. In halls, stairwells, cafes,
on buses – in the faces of a thousand
thousand strangers I looked for you.
Once in Arizona, stopping for pie,
a man asked could I recite the opening lines
of *Canterbury Tales*, because he dreamed
of a certain woman who would.
The way, when I was sixteen, you came
mid-sleep calling yourself Red:
you were dark-skinned, long hair braided,
and rode from the badlands on horseback.
I'm sorry, I told the man,
who had to go on looking.

And you, my love, to get here,
were sent out into a storm
that rained blue-hot hail,
requiring that you traverse a lonely beach
while lightning struck around you.
Everywhere you turned the world was on fire.
Behind, your house burned to the ground.
Thus, bearing our thunderous hearts,
we came to the same shade
under the same tree.
Are you writing a song? You asked.
No, a poem, I said.

Already much of the time we had
to be together is gone.
How much is left we do not know.

Yalobusha Review

Each moment is a hive, filled with honey,
a tree in fruit: waking in your arms,
bent over lettuce in the garden,
waltzing in the kitchen, paddling
toward sunset at Wakulla Beach among
dolphins giddy in an outgoing tide.
We have only moments, and deer tongue
growing where none had been in the bare dirt.
We have only this moment,
standing by a river, to say,
what glory, o wonder, o boundless grace.