

Masthead Logo

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# Clear White Stream

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## CLEAR WHITE STREAM

Clear white stream—  
a dead horse drifts;  
its legs are branches  
piercing the sky.

Clear white stream—  
a child dangles her pole;  
deep in the water  
a lungfish bites.

Clear white stream—  
a man mooring a boat;  
his cormorant is diving  
with rope around its gullet.

Clear white stream—  
a woman pounds hemp;  
headbent, she hums,  
“ripples washing sand.”

Clear white stream—  
a ripe red sun  
drags its head  
across the hollyhock.

Clear white stream—  
how all will pass:  
days and nights,  
one horse’s demise.

Clear white stream—  
above my forehead  
blue flies tarry  
around a naked bulb.

Clear white stream—  
am I river or horse,  
man or cormorant,  
woman or child?

Or Chuangtzu's bad dream  
shorn of an awakening.