

RIVERKEEPER

Wanting to be that place where inner
and outer meet, this morning
I'm listening to the river inside,
also to the river out the window,
river of sun and branch shadow, muskrat
and mallard, heron, and the rattled cry
of the kingfisher. Out there is a tree
whose roots the river has washed so often
the tree stretches beyond itself, its spirit
like mine, leaning out over the water, held
only by the poised astonishment
of being here. This morning, listening
to the river inside, I'm sinking into a stillness
where what can't be said stirs beneath
currents of image and memory, below strata
of muons and quarks, now rushes, now hushes
and pools, now casts a net of bright light
so loosely woven there's a constellation
afloat on the surface of the river, so still
I can almost hear it weave in and out—
interstellar, intercellular— and isn't it
truly all one, one world, no *in* or *out*, no *here*
or *there*, seamless, as a lily about to open
from just here into everywhere, is. Just is.
Restful lily. Lucky lily. To bloom must feel
like a river's brightening at daybreak,
or a slow kiss, a throb in the elapse of time,
a shudder of heron shadow flying over
shallows that are merely the apparent
skim of a depth whose bottomless surface
seeps everywhere, bloom and retraction,
an anchored flow that upholds city
and cathedral, bridge and gate,
Orion, odd toad in the Amazon, blue dragonfly,
what it is to love . . . Spoil a river, you spoil all this.