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## Riverdirge

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FRANCES SHARPLES

# Riverdirge

I don't want to hold anymore —  
the children that pull up that grass, the babies that swallow  
that moss, the men  
who drink up that river, the women who caress me  
and wish to swallow me whole,  
if quietly. I want to find it  
somewhere that is not here —  
my body, this earth,  
some extraterrestrial hill  
where I can be quiet alone and think about it, all  
something else. Mud cradled in the fingernails  
of a creature with love in its throat; antenna between  
front teeth; ocean gravel stuck  
to the palm that slaps  
me from behind. I am sick  
of dragging, of everything running through me  
when I am the mother of the world. From river hillside  
I am something  
covered in skin, sure, covered in  
shore, in wet, crashing, growth, melting, cascade, crest,  
breast and valley. Mother,  
would you make me in your image? a planet that holds so much  
in itself.