



**The**  
**Fourth River**

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**WORDS WITHOUT WALLS 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
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*Surfing Outside Log Cabins, Pacific Rim, 1998*

Waves so big you could fit two houses in them. And the swell's lip comes at you, breaks on you. At sixty-four pounds per cubic foot, water demands your atoms separate. That day everything lined up. Wind, current, wave—Outside Log Cabins in '98—nothing can compare.

A body, a board, the water. The sky watching. A helicopter lowered me,  
no other way in. I dangled, waiting for it. Gave the signal.

I always knew I'd get churned up good, worse than the washing machine  
you always hear about. But waves that have travelled thirteen  
hundred miles  
to be with you don't give up as easily as that. When I'd been under  
so long air was memory, I surfaced. Saw Kechua Mountain, thought  
it was the swell I'd just survived. But I turned and realized, faced  
that swell's mother instead. Didn't deserve to come up again I know.  
Call me a loose devil, fool, danger maker. But I do come up, always  
and again, I come up, wanting more. Water never gives enough.

D.O. Moore

||| POETRY

*Waiting for West Virginia*

Route 30 across southern Pennsylvania,  
the inward-folding fog wouldn't break.  
We moved carefully through, becoming part  
of the fat, wet air. Impatient, weighted down –  
the camp stove kerosene, our ideas  
of silent hikes on untended trails – we waited  
for the crags and rhododendron.

I woke that morning to the hotel's murmurings,  
looked to you, and my hair fell in front of my eyes  
in thin whips, marking your face with dark bands.  
I saw those same dividing lines when I looked  
out the car window, having turned from you  
and toward the Alleghenies, where narrow  
trees sectioned the winter mountains.

I was waiting for you to speak, wading  
through the silence, just as I am waiting now  
in the empty fluorescence of Monday morning's  
supermarket. The cash registers whir and clang,  
unstoppable, like the hail that finally came  
in Pennsylvania, tapping, reverberating distress  
through the windows we'd rolled up tight.