

Winyah Bay

by John Riley

Effie reckons the river her sister keeps asking about, the Great Pee Dee, was named after some Indians. She knows it runs north of Florence, close-by the farm their daddy worked. There's a college in Florence named after Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, who sure taught the British a thing or two, that hadn't been there when they were girls. She doesn't know what sort of lessons they teach at the college, but it's probably as big a waste of space as her sister is, spending day and night slumped in her wheelchair, slobber bib yellow and crusty, asking over and over what happened to the Great Pee Dee, never just the Pee Dee, mind you, always the Great Pee Dee, instead of sitting there quiet like a good girl and watching *The Price is Right*. Hope to die, when people start losing their minds they get stuck on the craziest notions. Worrying about a river, and here it is 1976, when everyone knows rivers don't mean a thing no more, what with the big trucks roaring up and down the superhighways and airplanes flying stuff all around the world day and night. It ain't like when they were girls and rivers did people some good and they'd sneak away from their chores to watch rafts of pine logs drift south on the slow current and wonder what it'd be like to float all the way to Winyah Bay.

