

# The River, Once

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once she went to quench  
then she went to scrub

now she collects dead toads  
grinds them with cornmeal to feed her sows

once she ploughed the land  
toiled with her face deep in dark soil

her back burning in hot sun  
now she works in the paper mill

making laminated labels for the city  
sundays she takes out a boat

not to take in the view or dream  
but to gather plastic bags

now she drinks from water bottles  
carted here all the way from the city

label reads: pure filtered glacier water  
and says it's drawn from a mountain

it reminds her of a spring  
at the foot of a sleeping dragon

