HEATHER MACLEOD

In the Summer of Flooding

There came the frog song in the summer of flooding; the river rose from the mountains melting snow and the rain came in spring and lasted through to autumn; the world was wet and green. And the frog moved over the torn roots of trees as they rolled down the Thompson; the frogs sang for the rain, and croaked out a mighty, Hallelujah.

I heard the choir sing in the summer of flooding; the cathedral rose up from the satiated earth, a cedar crucifix floated down the nave and out the door; everyone said it was a meaningful coincidence the way Noah’s ark was recreated in the stained glass over the vestibule. My chestbone felt like a vaulted ceiling, my body like a flying buttress for my soul; the rain seeped in from the roof and the river roared along the floor.

There came the song of toad in the summer of flooding; in the marsh of the hilltops he burrowed under leaves, and he sang the river rising just like his brother sang for rain, and he peeled off his old skin, to die and come again. And the river rose while the rain fell and the frogs sang out their noisy, Hallelujahs.

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Way to Go

Saturday noon wrinkled matrons take frail mothers out for lunch exchange smiles of patience past the single red carnations in glass vases.

One parked next to me, as I eased my bent mother into the car on the cliff above the seawall. She was chatting to her shoulder-belted mother, quietly dead.

Julia van Gorder lives in Vancouver, B.C. She is working on her fifth historical novel set in Canada.

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