
POETRY | FALL 2023

At the doctor's office, I check, Yes, I have experienced the following: Sudden weight loss

By Abby Wheeler

The river rises visibly after heavy rain.
Brown and muddy, debris barrels swiftly
downstream. Sandy banks swallowed

by swollen lips, no soft stretch
between the brush's green edge
and determined current. And then

the waters recede, shrink quickly
as if they've thrown off a winter coat.
Skinny trees, dirt-stained and sagging,

left shivering and exposed.
Where does it all go?

Pulled into the ground,
flooding our gardens
and mucking our dog parks.

Spread over hundreds of miles of riverbed.
When a person loses ten pounds,

eight of them leave the body as breath.
The rest, water. There is only home.

Abby Wheeler lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is a 2022 Pushcart nominee and has work published or forthcoming in *The Cimarron Review*; *Grist*; the anthology, *I Thought I Heard A Cardinal Sing: Ohio's Appalachian Voices* (Sheila-Na-Gig) and elsewhere. Her chapbook, *In the Roots*, is available from *Finishing Line Press*.

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