

# To Charm a River by Bob Beagrie

## *To Charm a River*

Toss a pebble so it skims  
the ripples once, twice,  
three times  
before it drops  
to sink to stir her  
from her bed,  
scatter grass and daisies  
across galvanised eddies  
where sunlight glistens  
and when she turns  
on a tidal shift  
ask her politely  
to come to tea.

Go home and wait  
patiently for when  
and if she arrives  
you will recognise her  
as your Great Aunt Peg  
from your Nana's photos  
wearing a swan feather bonnet  
a weed green coat  
a seal pelt shawl pinned  
by a brooch of jet, her breath  
will be full of foxgloves.

She will flow  
through the house  
taking a path of least resistance,  
under the surface of her skin  
semi translucent,  
shifting like rain in puddles  
are pot dogs on a window sill  
old nuts, washers, bolts, chains  
from broken hoists,  
from derailed trolleys.

Threatening to spill  
beyond her edges she will settle  
in a chair, slurp her tea, nibble cake,  
reminisce about her headlong rush  
from Crossfell toward the Gares,  
tumbling between eroded rocks  
the leap of High Force,  
the turns and twists  
through tangled woods,  
the brush of boats,  
the scrape of ships –  
of fish and tadpoles,  
dragonflies, a heron's beak,  
sun-clouds of midges, the dip  
and drip of a water wheel  
and how once upon a while  
folk would worship her  
for the life and death  
she brought before we thought  
we'd tamed her seasonal swell.

Her voice will splash  
and babble on, lap-lapping  
against your consciousness  
lulling you into sleep  
and when you wake,  
she's gone  
leaving sippy footprints  
across the kitchen floor.

**Bob Beagrie, 2015**

Commissioned by [Tees Valley Arts](#) and performed for the first time by Bob Beagrie at the River Tees Rediscovered VIP Launch.



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TVA is a participatory arts organisation, based in Middlesbrough and working across the Tees Valley, helping people change and improve their lives by taking part in the arts. TVA is a small organisation which makes a big impact in imaginative and unexpected ways.