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RIVER OF MY CHILDHOOD

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Long before I let the river
flow into my poems as a song of life,
my childhood drew
only fear from the story
of its fury—a caution from my mother.

“While crossing the bridge in dark,
the river could come home,
if not satiated with a coconut”—

I was warned in stories told by the old folks.

It remained a distant relation;
its presence was dodged.

In prime, in its fury, my reflection
echoed; from the bridge I called out
to the gleaming water under the moon.
The river became mine.

This monsoon, the fury was back,
and the bridge collapsed on a moonlit night.





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