Local Street Flooding Is Expected

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Recommended Citation
Available at: 10.31641/clr080212
In the Detroit of my childhood after heavy rain, always the sewers backed up into the basements, always the storm drains clogged and water filled the street an asphalt bottomed river.

Most likely it was filthy with germs and garbage, that neighborhood river, but what child of the inner city cared? We had no pools, no lakes. I never learned to swim. But we waded among the cars stranded like boulders, laughing splashing in shorts and turned up jeans. We didn’t care that basements would be smeared with mud after the waters crept out. This was our river and we rolled in it like puppies.

So many pleasures we had were accidental, a box discarded in an alley with high heels we could hobble in, a stray tabby become a pet, hard furtive kisses against the wall of a hallway smelling of cabbage.