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LOCAL STREET FLOODING IS EXPECTED

Marge Piercy

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.