



TRIBUTARIA

POETRY,
PROSE,
& ART
INSPIRED
BY
TRIBUTARIES
OF THE
OHIO RIVER
WATERSHED



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Oh Muskingum

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Your bends and curves
an alchemy of amalgamation—
the Tuscarawas and Walhonding,
those wily washes urging
you south where the Licking
awaited you, mingled,
hitched a ride alongside,
the lot of you swashing
into the Ohio, your mossy banks
thick with hemlock and black birch.

Once home to Algonquian,
Hopewell, Adena and Shawnee,
generations carving their lives
from your rugged spine
long before Sproat and Putnam
paddled your depths, before
their Gunter's chains measured,
claimed and named your wilderness.

The Northwest Territory
thought to tame you, constrain you
to its newfangled ways,
sandstone locks and bristly dams,
steam-powered vessels
wrestling, cresting, puffing
their way into the future,
mistaking your reliance
for compliance, your temper
fueled by squall and flurry,
your worst freshet
a crest—58 feet, Marietta, Ohio,
every wrath a humbling,
your message clear, *start over,*
do better.

We have scrambled,
gambled, bled and wept.
Your Siren's song calls
and we sing, your wild sighs
beg us to love you, so
we elegize how ardently we do.