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## Baptism in the River

James Doyle

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## BAPTISM IN THE RIVER

James Doyle

The cypresses have running water  
from the recent rains. Heads bent

under the swamp feel the glide  
of words down their bodies, runoff

among the tree roots and reptile  
hides. The prehistoric floor muscles

into sand and fossil whatever  
it is given—flash flood, mosquito

swarm, prayer sidling underwater  
like vines. The river is sluggish

with new bodies in white gowns.  
The rock holds are steady for climbing

out, drying skins on the other shore,  
lying down for the next cloud to break.