

## ***Hocking River***

Maddy McFadden

It's like walking against the current of a muddy, all-consuming stream. But, there, even in the winter, are lightening bugs made of water when a ripple crams between the Canada Thistle. *Will it ever rain?* as the clouds dither, too.

Like, have you ever worked through your tragedy so well,  
you became clinical,  
like you're not even alive?

(We don't like the black rocks in that dog's face, *do we?*)

I'm friendly towards my lack of direction, so I'll never have to see the highway beyond those hills.

Like, when people don't understand that the past is forever or that the asphyxiation, or corroded teeth eating sores into inferior labial frenulums caused by the residue on the fentanyl spoons, or his radial bursa blackening her short head tendons, pounding her and compounding her, and smooshing her completely, or bloody backs, hollow kids, beaten bitches, roasted witches— and, brussel sprouts, too!— live in our children's neurons, energy beyond atoms, and the collagen of their tracheas for billions of years.

And, I wonder if the geese are crying over the fast manure running as the Miles Davis Quintet plays, or maybe we're just hungry.

Like, everything doesn't have to be something, I'd just like to feel myself breathe in and out.