LEAVING HOME

A man with a guitar sits in a swaying boat strumming "Moon River" and it's a hard song to hear as the wet fact inches higher.

It rose in the night like a rheumy moon despite here-and-there dark patches the morning defined as dams and dikes. It overcame them easy as clouds shimmering across sight, surface shiny as the moon but nothing like a celebrated satellite you could gaze up at, it was water! Miles of it loose as moonwash but with daylight truth on the earthscape.

Water and moon: Some ancient arcane bond still strong, far from ocean tides, beyond old midwives' tales. Amniotic fluid flowing without a birthing, a week's travail and nothing to show for it but a slimy signature. A receipt for all your labor and maybe all you own.

Moon-filled water, stink-filled sandbags, ribbons of rotting crops bandaging the levees, mud-caked metaphors and your life's artifacts compose a sorrowscape no melody can carry, no lyrics can lift.

The last motorboat loads, leaves a brown wake like a fresh-plowed furrow in your best land. The guitarist, drifting, peels off a few more chords like soaked plywood and floats them after the barn gone downcurrent two days ago. Slowly he resumes rowing into an oak woodland greenly ghosted beneath him, its moss floor coming loose like pieces of lawn carpet, rising, bobbing around his oars, one rafting a Barbie doll dressed in gold lame.

And you declare nature the master ironist.

And you quit thinking of when the fabled moon and river made their appointed rounds and knew their place and you could recognize yours.