



## Waterlines: Poems

*Alison Pelegrin*

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In *Waterlines*, Louisiana native Alison Pelegrin gives us poems that describe the terrible power of nature even as they underscore the state's beauty. The poet moves from the familiar gaudy delights of life in New Orleans to immerse the reader in the vastly different experience of living north of Lake Pontchartrain. In this fractured world, the Bogue Falaya River becomes a highway paved with benedictions, psalms, and praise for ordinary things, as Pelegrin searches the unfamiliar for an incarnation of home.

Water—the threat of hurricanes and floods, as well as the tangled geographies and histories of the rivers and lakes themselves—sustains the poet as she settles into the casual beauty of “the daily route,” finding spiritual depth and delight in both human and natural wonders.

In another life, in Japan, I could write

that I have begun the descent down Mt. Fuji,

only to find that snow is the same on both sides.

Here, I'm bound to heat and words of water,

because even as the world loosens its hold

on me, the rivers are slow to release.

What else is worth saying?

The days wind down, I drag my hand

through the moon's golden scribble

on the river.

I'm amazed yet again by frog song

and snowfall stars, but there's no more changing

the words inked on my paper boat.

—from “Bogue Falaya Death Barge”

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