

## Flood

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A young man walked along the garden path, head down. His heart was broken. The weather around him was dark. Over the little wooden bridge, to the river. The water stumbled over rocks, carried leaves and twigs. In his angry mind and in his aching heart, the young man cursed everything. God, the sky, the earth, her, himself.

The river listened.

As he watched, the river rose. The rocks disappeared as the water swelled over the embankment. The young man's heart stuttered.

The river wept with him. A flood of garbage flowed past. Paper and broken fragments of plastic. The young man tried his best to capture it all, to haul it out of the river. For the first time in a long time, he felt needed.

When the water receded, he looked at the pile of garbage he'd managed to remove and thought of the rest that had passed beyond his reach. He wondered if he could ever do enough.

Something splashed in the water. A tall, white bird stirred the current with its thin legs. The young man felt a lightness inside, as if a wind had pushed aside the fog that had settled in his soul.

I know you, the bird said. I thank you. I love you. Then it lifted into the sky like a prayer.

The river was in the young man's shoes, in the cuffs of his jeans, had soaked into his skin. I love you, too, he said.