

The River, Once

by Marc Vincenz

once she went to quench
then she went to scrub

now she collects dead toads
grinds them with cornmeal to feed her sows

once she ploughed the land
toiled with her face deep in dark soil

her back burning in hot sun
now she works in the paper mill

making laminated labels for the city
sundays she takes out a boat

not to take in the view or dream
but to gather plastic bags

now she drinks from water bottles
carted here all the way from the city

label reads: pure filtered glacier water
and says it's drawn from a mountain

it reminds her of a spring
at the foot of a sleeping dragon

