

As the Stream Flows

If you live as this stream lives:
Meandering here, surging strongly there,
Resting now in deep pools;
If you descend gratefully to the valley floor
Where, contented, you flow contemplatively
In the meadow lands until, emptying yourself,
You merge peaceably with the great river—
Then you live your days well.

But if you are stubborn,
Like this old tree trunk, that,
Years ago, fell across the stream,
Blocking its course and gathering debris;
If you are obdurate, forcing the water
Back on itself in swirling eddies, confused;
Then the water will, regardless, find its way
Around and through you.

Day by day you resist, pushing back;
The stream smoothes the edges;
Day by day it carries away more
Of the coarse bark, then
Seeps through the tiny cracks, softening
Even the heartwood—that tough inner core—
Until your molecules, one by one,
Float away, mingling with the current.

Then, old log, you join the
Stream, as you freely glide home.

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