

River

by marra *Wednesday, Dec 26 2012, 11:48am*

international / poetry / post



sitting by the bank
the water snaps
a tail whips
a gleam catches
the sunlight
in a flash a fish disappears
into the depths

perfectly adapted
to the medium
freshwater fish
appear and disappear at will
evading traps and lines
which they tangle in
the rushes and
roots of water trees

i've sat and watched
from this bank countless
times, it is never the same
though we imagine
the river is constant

we've given it an English name
and mapped it
yet the river evades
our feeble attempts to fix it
in any lexicon

it once teamed with
aquatic and amphibian
life
singing frogs,
flashing fish
and cunning cod
have evaded extinction
for thousands of years
though today their days
are numbered

the river unhappily accepts
runoff from rains laden with
toxic sprays and fertilisers

modern man has no connection
to the land/environment
he sees it through words, stats
litres, dams and forced production

for thousands of years
it supported the originals,
no better stewardship exists
than native people inextricably
linked to the land

we killed them off
before we killed the river,
what do primitives know
of modern farming methods
and aquaculture?

very little, but they knew how
to harvest its bounty without
upsetting the delicate balance
that sustained all manner
of life

and what do we know?

how to exploit, pollute
and kill everything we touch

we continue to regard the originals
as ignorant primitives.