

## CHANGES THAT NATURE PRODUCES

Light Filtering Downstream  
oil knife painting by Peter Muzyka

### Abandoned

*By: George Heiring*

On a thin blue dusty road  
I came to an abandoned barn,  
it's frame warped, its siding  
wind-scoured with faint  
streaks of red bleeding  
into weathered boards.  
Crosshatched doors hung  
askew on rusted tracks.

A smoke of swallows  
swirled from gashes in its roof.

It is a fortress under siege  
by ruthless Vandals.  
Windward walls surrendered  
heavy, textured planks  
to enclose a foxy den,  
the hand-forged vane  
that crowned the cupola  
looted by those who prize  
the past without honoring it.

Come see this wearied place  
leaning against the sky.

It cannot stay much longer  
to honor the lush green land,  
Yet until its spine is cracked,  
you will find it rocking  
gently in the wind

like a hired hand living out  
his days on the farmhouse porch.

### Songs of A Buried River

*By: George Heiring*

You see that lone conifer leaning into the wind?  
Below it, the lakeshore falls off quick and steep.  
That's where the old river is buried.

It's true. A great river once swept by this point,  
brown and rich with stolen sediment, a full  
hundred yards from bank-to-bank in spring.

A stream born in highlands of mildew and mist,  
an infant shaped by shoals and surging rapids,  
wrapped in a blanket of rainbow spray.

Down it came, notching the Piedmont steps,  
gnawing on valleys of stubborn red-clay,  
a wayward adolescent seeking the easiest path.

Wild azaleas clung to its banks. Yellow jasmine,  
scuppernongs, dogwoods, timid red bud flourished,  
their colors screaming at the sky.

God lived here then. But soon came patches of  
Indian corn, then cotton fields, great mill wheels  
with creaking gear grinding out fortunes.

This great river sang a song of origins, of small  
and fleeting histories never written down.  
It sang melodies of uncelebrated lives.

Hear, then, painted Creeks and Spanish priests,  
pole boatmen setting out from upstream shores,  
slaves sweating in broad cotton fields.  
Hear a farm wife snapping peas, the slap  
of matched, high-stepping ponies  
as plantation gentry went to meeting.

No, you can't see it. But the river's there,  
entombed within this comfortable lake  
of fresh-shaved hills and spacious homes.

Those who fish for bass know where it is.  
Before daybreak they hang their boats above  
its dark stain, waiting for a heavy line.

When fishermen ride the sunset home  
slow wakes arch above the rivers grave  
as prayers to uncomplaining ghosts.

Listen, then. Wait until the evening wind  
is still and you will hear a buried river sing  
its soft song of unclaimed yesterdays.



George is a native Iowan and a graduate of Iowa University where he fell under the influence of the renowned Iowa Writers Workshop. His business career focused on corporate communication and he retired as a senior partner in one of the world's leading management consulting firms. George and his wife Donna live on Lake Oconee in middle Georgia and keep a part-time residence in suburban Chicago.



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## FARM FIELDS - BUCKHEAD, GEORGIA

Along with the abandoned farm buildings, the evolving Georgia landscape also reflects change. The fields of hay, cotton, soy, rapeseed, and other crops are sometimes left to nature's devices. These photographic views are of both the small farms that are still active in agricultural, and others that have been left to wild grasses and scrub. Over the decades, many crop fields have been re-purposed to develop shopping malls, distribution centers, housing developments, and other non-farming properties. Still others remain untouched and have become habitat for wildlife.

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*photographs by Peter Muzyka*

