

## THE AGE OF WATERS

For G.C. Waldrep

### WATER-MUSIC

The grouped stanzas below are a fugue, and are to be read simultaneously by three voices. The first voice reads only the first line of each stanza and proceeds to the first line of the next; the other two voices do likewise for the second and third lines, respectively. “•” indicates silence.

{.  
In the Age of Waters in TUALATIN, OREGON,

{.  
standing water looks out of itself — then, moving

{.  
water. Water heavy, indefatigable,

{.  
During the Ages of Waters in Oregon,  
looks out from the pit of its ice near Missoula,

(5) {.  
water pulled to light, water with breasts of glaciers,  
moves, creeps towards the crumble of the holding

{.  
skin of silts — water dispersing “contracting into a span” —  
continent, carving valleys, making sleeves for the rivers —

{  
Back in the Age of Waters, the Age of Wet  
dragged towards the core — seeping, dripping, roaring  
but now barred by walls, tarries inland, now —

{  
and Waters, water was dragged and kept in stone pits,  
into, on through the stone of the Ages of Waters, nets  
now deepening — now, now deepening, deepening, now

{  
but soon burst out — “meandering sluggishly across  
of water, mouths of water, scrolls, blots of water, smirches  
bursts through WALLULA, UMATILLA, spans from WALLA WALLA

(10) { valley in braided channels, oxbows, sloughs, sandbars,  
 of water smirching water —  
 to CROWN POINT, drowns CROWN POINT, builds ALAMEDA,  
 riffles,” moving water, nets of water, wounds of water,  
 wreathes of water, leaves of water —  
 carries MONTANA, PALOUSE, down, down, down into itself —  
 churches of water, now blown on by the wind  
 water condensed — then —  
 along the COLUMBIANA, mothering lakes,  
 of the Age of Water —  
 an exhalation —  
 lakes, and lakes, scattering argillite, uranic  
 .  
 kenosis of water beneath the wind in the wilds,  
 granite, unites, combines itself, to the water,

(15) { .  
 the wild mindlessnesses of the Ages of Waters  
 and the water of the ocean of the Age of Waters —  
 .  
 in Tualatin, Oregon — in the Ages of Waters  
 .

{ .  
 blown-on,  
 in Tualatin, Oregon, wind or, or — breathing,  
 .

{ now, now grown-on, grown-on waters of the Age of Wet  
 in the waters, now, a breathing-in, of the water,  
 .

{ and Waters, on whose smear the tip of the fern blossoming long  
now in the now of the water of the Ages of Waters,  
.

(20) { slurs draws a wavering V—aquatic water, amphibian water,  
during the waters of the Age of Waters, in Columbiana—  
.

{ “part of it crawling, part of it about to crawl,” wraiths, wraiths of water  
.

{ in the frills of gills, and breathed-in water—breathed-on water—  
.

{ breathed in, froth of the bond of the broth of the breaths  
.  
In the Age of Waters, in TUALATIN, OREGON,

{ and the breaths of the Age of Waters in TUALATIN, OREGON—  
Flowing out of the cave of an age of the Ages  
silent water—

(25) { .  
of Waters, the Ages of Stone stirred to the softness  
.

{ .  
of an ear, of a lupin, of water, or of daffodil,  
During the Age of Waters in Tualatin, Oregon,

{ .  
talc daffodils, talc faces thronging the waters  
unheard water looked out of itself—

{  
·  
in the Ages of Waters, water of green — rivers  
·

{  
“Green River,” WILLAMETTE, river without sides,  
of green, green rivers, green river, WILLAMETTE, river  
·

(30) {  
moving water moved and moving out of the Age  
of green, flowing, dark green —  
·

{  
of Stone, Age of Wet and Water, Age of Ice, Age  
Green rivers, gold laden —  
·

{  
of Spore, Age of Gills and Bellows, Bellowing Water —  
rivers of riches — the milks of the salts from the silts  
Green rivers, gold-laden, rivers of riches —

{  
·  
from the Ages of Water —  
the silts and the ashes and the salts from the breasts

{  
·  
— in the Age of Waters in  
of the Age of Waters — WALL-LAMT, WILARMET, WALLAMETTE,

(35) {  
the COLUMBIANA, standing water looks out —  
·  
WILLAMETTE, river greened, spilling, gold-laden, where

{  
of itself then — moving water, gold-laden, where seals  
During the Ages of Water in TUALATIN  
“water ripples and runs fast,” green river, gold-laden,

{ swim under the steeps, the “high walls of basalt with sudden  
OREGON — standing water looked of itself —  
river of beavers, lampreys, salmon, slaves, seals, canoes

{ cracks in them” — and the buoyant Siren whose snout made  
. .  
hollowed in thick fire, rivers of tongues, tongues of rivers,

{ the snorting of tame horses in the water, whose fat  
. .  
CHINOOK, KALAPUYA, TUALATIN, YONCALLA; rivers

(40) { competed with the “best Holland butter” and reeked  
. .  
of riches, rivers of teeth, rivers of beads, meats,

{ and reeked of fresh fresh almonds; “placid, loyal,  
. .  
abalone brought up from the GREAT BASIN, down

{ loving, and delicious,” snuffling right up to the boat’s  
. .  
from WALLA WALLA, UMATILLA; rivers of frogs,

{ wallowing gunwales, “first one foot, then the other, as cattle  
During the Ages of Waters in TUALATIN —  
rivers of Frog Women, Coyote; free, undammed waters —

{ do, sheep do, when they graze, and thus with a gentle motion  
OREGON — standing water looked out of itself — then, moving  
In the age of the green river, gold-laden green rivers,

(45) { half-swim, half-walk” half in the shining, soiling, clanging,  
waters, green, gold-paved, commodious commodity  
winding through fires, rivers of sextants, of schooners,

{ diaphene — half on a dogged blade  
of waters pawing and pawing the waterwheels,  
of gunpowder, of beavers and otters bashed with boulders

{ too blunt for blubber — and the otters, “stupid, sluggish,  
green rivers, gold-laden, aboriginal green scooped, drunk,  
and bartered with the RUSSIANS, the SPANIARDS, the BRITISH

{ surly, sleepy, forever sleepy, capturable  
tippling musical through the windows, plucked waters,  
stumbling upon and naming CAPE FOULWEATHER, PERPETUA —

{ without any painstaking, any ingenuity,”  
slurs of water bowed out the cave of the age of the Ages  
rivers of riches, rivers of Good-and-Bounty, rivers

(50) { frantic, strangling in the nets knotting around loose  
of Water in TUALATIN, OREGON, when standing  
of commerce and plenty and schooners filled with otter skins,

{ eyes, chewing off their own forepaws —  
water looked out of itself, moving, water  
beaver skins, bound for MACAU, the PEARL RIVER,

{ 800 otters in the holds of tiny ST. PETER —  
indefatigable, mothering itself,  
WHAMPOA — pelts of creatures from and of the waters

{ and the mush, those sea-cows at last obstinate,  
its own great- great- grandkin —  
from the Age of Waters, sold for tea, silks,

{ sticking to barrels, to wood teeth; 800 otter pelts  
green rivers, gold-laden, waters of slurs and insects,  
cinnamon, desks, and cups and saucers splashed with arabesques

(55) { sewn onto coats in CHINA with sandalwood buttons —  
diseased water, heavy, dropsical with breath and disease  
of blue cranes, blue water, blue forests — rivers of riches,

{ WILLAMETTE, green river, gold-laden, “river of sickness” —  
rivers of argosies returning from the faraways,

{ malarial river, variolal river of the settler’s headcold —  
bustling like Batavia and bearing “alter-pieces

{ WILLAMETTE of treaties and disease; WILLAMETTE,  
reworked in Asia with gold and silver” given by LIMA,

{ SALMON, LITTLE and BIG NESTUCCA, stocked with fish, rivers  
POTOSI, NUEVA GRANADA — abundance, abundance —

(60) { of game and hunt, rivers of abundance, of giving,  
abounding waters, generous, waters

{ rivers of giving, given rivers of giving, rivers  
of generosity, generous waters of the ROGUE,

{ of taken-away waters, rivers of taking, gold-laden,  
the DESCHUTES, the TILLAMOOK, MACKENZIE, taking, o gladly

{ green, WILLAMETTE, SALMON, YAMHILL halving the given land,  
taking tattered leather, a broken bayonet, tipsy



{.  
land made under the waters of the Ages of Waters,  
kettles, two chipped bronze USA buttons; yielding coats,

(65) {.  
land of horses, land of tangled tongues — UPPER UMPQUAS,  
hats, gloves, tapestries, curtains; always returning, accruing,

{.  
TAKLEMA, KALAPUYA, CHINOOK WAWA,  
green rivers, green abundance, abundance of green,

{.  
YONCALLA, ENGLISH; given land of the “language-houses,” horses,  
ASTORIA, CHAMPOEG, FORT WILLIAM gleaming green in the green

{  
In the Age of Wet and Water in TUALATIN, OREGON,  
horse races, treaties-then-assurances to the 400 left —  
waters of the GREAT RIVER OF THE WEST, fertile seal-bearing

{  
standing water looked out of itself — then, moving water —  
400 left to the ceded waters made  
beaver-breeding otter-giving waters, waters up which,

(70) {.  
in the Ages of Water in Tualatin, Oregon, when standing  
into a hundred, a thousand, a million ripples of havocs

{.  
water looked: moving waters —  
of greens, a breathless otter stumbles, chokes, pursued by stones,

{.  
pursued by nets, by bayonets, a faulty bayonet —