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Night River

Billy C. Clark

Appalachian Heritage, Volume 32, Number 2, Spring 2004, p. 37 (Article)

Published by The University of North Carolina Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aph.2004.0047>

Appalachian Heritage



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Night River

I cannot hear the river play tonight
Current songs among the willow snags
Or see the stars blinking like candle light
Upon a rippling world of bullfrog brag;
Nor heaving paddlewheels that used to burn
A fiery path of light marking their way,
Their frothing wooden blades that used to churn
Night water into ghosts of moonlit spray
I cannot see night ravens on the shore
Or catch a willow bloom within my hand
Knowing a river as in times before
Leaving a footprint on the golden sand.
I cannot catch what is no longer there
Except within a dream, within a prayer.

—Billy C. Clark