

Thomas Lux

THE RIVER BETWEEN THE TRAIN AND THE
HIGHWAY

Branches bend to the river
as if to drink from it. The trees' roots
in the riverbank you'd think close enough
to have their fill
without this kneeling.
Is it some instinct the trees feel
to create a circuit, a circular
current between the tree and the river?
Is it a drive
towards Oneness as the swami
from a desert country says?
I believe the trees, their branches,
are merely bent, beaten.
The banks are black, soaked by rain and oil
from the highway 30 yards above.
The trees are black and nearly bare.
The river, stream (what is the order
of diminishment: river, stream, brook,
rivulet, trickle?) is also black,
and shallow. It's going to join somebody
who's going to join somebody
who's going to sea. It won't
be back. It's going
to enter the sea
somewhere near a huge metropolis,
a beautiful and tortured city,
toward which the highway goes
and is terminus,
toward which the train goes
and is also terminus
in a house so large
it has its own sky and stars.