

Penny for the Ferryman

I pay my dues to Severn-Trent
for water on tap, a commodity
bought and sold, profits for shareholders.

We have lost our reverence
for river deities, names forgotten,
Hafren, Sabrina, Samarosina, *land of the summertime fallow*
Tros hynt, *strongly flooding*, Trisantona, *pathway of a goddess*

We no longer see the miracle
of a spring bubbling through rock,
wonder at the mystery of a sacred well,
honour liminal pathways, portals,
make votive offerings - a silver coin,
penny for the ferryman.

Instead, we pollute and exploit,
dam tributaries, build over floodplains
and rivers rise in vengeance –

The Severn bore
roars its anger,
The Trent surges,
spews pesticides, poison, sewage.

We know now the cost of our hubris,
and we are joining together,
challenging those in power,
wild swimmers and wildlife campaigners -

Rivers Trust and Our Rivers

Clear Access Clear Waters

Thames 21 and Up Sewage Creek

Clean Rivers campaigners

renewing, reclaiming respect,

synchronising.

Sue Mackrell