

A River's Mark

Poem by John Butler

My mark begins in mountains high above the gathered plains
'Mongst granite boulders set and sealed by sands of their remains
It starts with granules in a line; else varied grades of silt define
My first marks on the pristine land.

I carve down through the marks of time and secrets open as I go
The footprints left from thousands years where other rivers used to flow
I raise old truths from earth's great pit, I polish gems with diamond grit
My sparkling mark upon the land.

With clamorous noise I carve the steeps and quieter flow along the deeps
I never cease my endless toil, rumbling rocks and sifting soil
Rambling onwards to the sea, in duty bound to gravity
I weave my mark upon the land.

I gurgle in the gullies' guts, I clutter over stony walls
I bubble in the shady glades and tumble down in waterfalls
Until at last on the gentle plain I ripple through a wide domain
And craft my mark upon the land.

Though gentle I may seem to be, when tempests rage and strengthen me
I gather energy enough to wreck the bridges, cave the bluff
Sweep fences, sheds and stock away and change the lives of all who stay
To grieve my scars upon the land.

If life be like a river, our souls are as the land
Shaped and formed by forces which we may not understand
We pray misfortune's wretched scars will soon become mere flotsam on the tide
While all the marks of loving care are blessed and sanctified.