

2017

Flood

Michael J. Adams
University of Wollongong, madams@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/sspapers>



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Adams, Michael J., "Flood" (2017). *Faculty of Social Sciences - Papers*. 4048.
<https://ro.uow.edu.au/sspapers/4048>

Flood

Abstract

Flash fiction

Keywords

flood

Disciplines

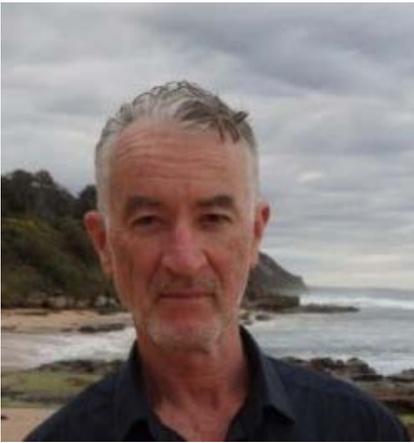
Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Adams, M. (2017). Flood. *Mascara Literary Review*, 21 1.

Flood by Michael Adams

DECEMBER 19, 2017 / MASCARA / 0 COMMENTS



Michael Adams is a writer and academic living near Wollongong. His work has been published in *Meanjin*, *The Guardian*, and *Australian Book Review*, as well as numerous academic journals and book chapters. His essay on freediving, loss and mortality, 'Salt Blood' won the 2017 Calibre Essay Prize.

Flood

He has driven down in tears in the car from the conversations with the psychologist, and the way they run the retreat lays bare his emotions even more (a woman he doesn't know next to him on the mats is also sobbing). By Sunday first thing he is a mess, and after the early morning meditation session feels shaky and vulnerable. He cannot bear to be with other people, so walks across fields to the river. It has been raining for days, everything is sodden, green, muddy.

But the river is a vision: huge, swollen, patterned, powerfully moving, the great sweep of current surging down. It has swelled over the banks, completely fills the low valley. The sky is unbroken white, rain is hammering down, a percussion of sound – water on leaves, on wood, on mud, on water. The river itself makes no sound, the enormous powerful surge of current totally silent. It is a great block of muted colour with a mobile, patterned, articulated surface.

A bird flies heavily away from low branches, dark in the clouded morning. There is no one here. He strips on the flooded ledge, piles his clothes in the wet fork of a tree, steps naked into the water. The air is warm and humid, the rain cold on his shoulders, his feet grip the sliding mud. He takes another step and dives, swims hard into the middle of the river, strokes strong and precise. The river is cold but he feels encased in his warm body, the cold just flowing over his skin, not reaching his core. When he pauses to orient, the far bank looks like the Amazon, a dense wall of wet green forest coming down to the water's edge.

In the middle of the swollen current he feels good, his body reliable. The joy and wild beauty of the swim have recalibrated him. The current is pushing fast and he turns upstream to gain some distance. Eyes open, the light glows through brown silty water, eyes closed he is back inside his warm body. Swimming hard and gracefully, there is a sudden massive shock – a split second of realisation, the broken tree trunk swirls past, blood in his eyes, blood in the brown water. He feels his slackening body roll in the dark flood.

[#Issue 21](#)

Varuna Mascara Writers Fellowship



Recent Posts

[Thuy On](#)

[Jill Jones](#)

[Siobhan Hodge reviews *Renga* by John Kinsella and Paul Kane](#)

[Vagabond deciBels3 Launch Speech by Emily Stewart](#)

[From cultures of violence to ways of peace by Anne Elvey](#)

[Asif Rahimi](#)

[Erfan Dana](#)



Mascara's editorial support have raised my writing to a higher and more humane level.

- Martin Kovan

Newsletter

First Name

Last Name

Email

deciBels3



[My Tweets](#)

[Tweets by @mascarareview](#)



Australian Government



Wollongong Writers Festival



© 2007-2018 Mascara Poetry Inc. First Published April 07, ISSN: 1835-4017

All Rights Reserved All work in Mascara is the sole property of the artists and may not be reproduced for any purpose without permission.

सर्वे मा नवाः स्वतन्त्राः समुत्पन्नाः वर्तन्ते अपचि, गौरवदृशा अधिका रदृशा च समा नाः एव सर्वे मा नवाः
वर्तन्ते। एते सर्वे चेतना - तर्क-शक्तभियां सु सम्पन्नाः सन्तति अपचि, सर्वेऽपि बन्धुत्व-भा वनया वर्तन्ते। एते स