

An Otter by Tom Titus

Bicycling to work the other morning,
A winter of relentless rain
Had finally worn me down,
Delivering the *coup de grace*
With a south wind firing
Gray split shots of
Cold, hard water onto my back.
I wasn't particularly happy,
About anything.

Turning onto the bike path,
Where for thirteen winters
I've watched the willows
Along Amazon Creek,
Doggedly reclaim this
Otherwise unsightly ditch,
I noticed a dimple in the
Slippery rain-swollen water,
A swirl at odds with the current
Then up popped a river otter.

Unlikely bottlebrush-whiskers
Bristled from a face too round
For her long lanky body.
Ducking underwater
She reappeared downstream,
Side stroking into the current,
Watching me intently,
Sleek, graceful,
Dark-chocolate power against
A mocha-brown creek.

The otter spoke,
But I couldn't hear
Over the drone of rush hour traffic.
I imagined she was saying,

“Lighten your load,
These winds will carry this storm away
And winter with it.
Play awhile!