

The background of the cover is a vibrant blue-toned illustration. It depicts a river with white, swirling lines representing water. Overlaid on the river are dark silhouettes of people and trees. The figures of people are shown in various poses, some appearing to be walking or standing near the water's edge. The trees are stylized with rounded canopies. The overall composition is layered and textured, with the white lines of the water creating a sense of movement and depth against the blue background.

ISSUE THIRTEEN : SPRING 2019
OPEN RIVERS :
RETHINKING WATER, PLACE & COMMUNITY

WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

<http://openrivers.umn.edu>

An interdisciplinary online journal rethinking the Mississippi
from multiple perspectives within and beyond the academy.

ISSN 2471-190X

The cover image is by Matt Huynh, 2019 (<http://www.matthuynh.com>).

Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/). This means each author holds the copyright to her or his work, and grants all users the rights to: share (copy and/or redistribute the material in any medium or format) or adapt (remix, transform, and/or build upon the material) the article, as long as the original author and source is cited, and the use is for noncommercial purposes.

Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community is produced by the [University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing](https://www.libraries.umn.edu/) and the [University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Study](https://www.umn.edu/advanced-study/).

Editors

Editor:

Patrick Nunnally, Institute for Advanced Study,
University of Minnesota

Administrative Editor:

Phyllis Mauch Messenger, Institute for Advanced
Study, University of Minnesota

Assistant Editor:

Laurie Moberg, Institute for Advanced Study,
University of Minnesota

Media and Production Manager:

Joanne Richardson, Institute for Advanced Study,
University of Minnesota

Contact Us

Open Rivers

Institute for Advanced Study

University of Minnesota

Northrop

84 Church Street SE

Minneapolis, MN 55455

Telephone: (612) 626-5054

Fax: (612) 625-8583

E-mail: openrvrs@umn.edu

Web Site: <http://openrivers.umn.edu>

ISSN 2471-190X

Editorial Board

Jay Bell, Soil, Water, and Climate, University of
Minnesota

Tom Fisher, Minnesota Design Center, University
of Minnesota

Lewis E. Gilbert, futurist

Mark Gorman, Policy Analyst, Washington, D.C.

Jennifer Gunn, History of Medicine, University of
Minnesota

Katherine Hayes, Anthropology, University of
Minnesota

Nenette Luarca-Shoaf, Art Institute of Chicago

Charlotte Melin, German, Scandinavian, and
Dutch, University of Minnesota

David Pellow, Environmental Studies, University
of California, Santa Barbara

Laura Salvesson, community member and artist

Mona Smith, Dakota transmedia artist; Allies:
media/art, Healing Place Collaborative

CONTENTS

Introductions

Introduction to Issue Thirteen By Laurie Moberg, Assistant Editor	4
Guest Editor's Introduction to Issue Thirteen: Water & Environmental Justice By Simi Kang	6

Feature

“Contraband” Practice: Doing Environmental Justice with Water By Karen Bauer, Merle Geode, Simi Kang, Chika Kondo 近藤千嘉, David Naguib Pellow, 심제현 Jae Hyun Shim, and 신 선 영 辛善英 Sun Yung Shin	13
---	----

Features (Peer Review)

Life Otherwise at the Sea's Edge By Macarena Gómez-Barris	27
The Political Binds of Oil versus Tribes By Yvonne P. Sherwood	48
There's Something in The Water By Tia-Simone Gardner	69

Geographies

Resonant Rivers: Water, Indigenous Relationality, and Other Futures By Caroline Fidan Tyler Doenmez	89
--	----

In Review

Storying Pinhook: Representing the Community, the Floods, and the Struggle By Lisa Marie Brimmer	96
---	----

Perspectives

the river By adrienne maree brown	103
Extract: Locating Indigeneity in Immigrant Experiences By Adriel Luis	110

Primary Sources

What Helps You Dream? By Simi Kang	117
---	-----

Teaching And Practice

“The Soul to See”: Toward a Hoodoo Ethnography By David Todd Lawrence	123
--	-----

PRIMARY SOURCES

WHAT HELPS YOU DREAM?

By Simi Kang

To create this list of “contraband” practices (forwarded by David Naguib Pellow in our feature of the same name), our contributors responded to the following question: If you were to gift someone one thing (reading/practice/site of engagement) to guide them to environmental justice or a different relationship with water, what would it be? The resources below were shared with me largely in informal context; I welcome you to experience this list as a living conversation rather than a formal, grammatically or structurally precise document.

As the issue editor, I want to offer my own answers as well, including a few organizations and initiatives that have been central to my ongoing education regarding environmental justice (EJ), water, and community advocacy:

First, I am constantly overwhelmed by the work of two environmental justice and water-related projects in what is called Louisiana: Another Gulf is Possible, whose name is also their platform, and the L'eau Est La Vie Camp, which continues to mobilize against the southernmost end of the Dakota Access Pipeline in Chata Houma Chittimacha Atakapaw territory.



Detail from “Washing Rice,” 2018. Image courtesy of Tori Hong.

Second, Southerners on New Ground (SONG) is truly doing the work of reshaping what justice is and can be in the U.S. South. They are “committed to restoring a way of being that recognizes our collective humanity and dependence on the Earth” by envisioning “a movement in which LGBTQ people—poor and working class, immigrant, people of color, rural—take our rightful place as leaders shaping [the South’s] legacy and future.” This, I think, is the most concise definition of environmental justice I have encountered.

Third, BYP100 is “a national member-based organization of 18-35 year old activists and organizers creating freedom and justice for all Black people” and part of the Movement for Black Lives. Their blog is incredible and includes posts like “Turning the fight to save the environment into a fight for racial justice.”

Finally, here are a few podcasts I listen to regularly that either directly engage environmental justice or whose work critically parses identities, moments, concepts, histories, and futures related to EJ:

- The Racist Sandwich is hosted by Soleil Ho and Zahir Janmohamed and focuses on “food x race x class x gender”
- How to Survive the End of the World, where adrienne maree brown and Autumn Brown commit to “learning from the apocalypse with grace, rigor and curiosity”
- Healing Justice Podcast “for stories + practices at the intersection of collective healing + social change”
- flyover, a Minnesota Public Radio series on the places and cultures of the Mississippi River

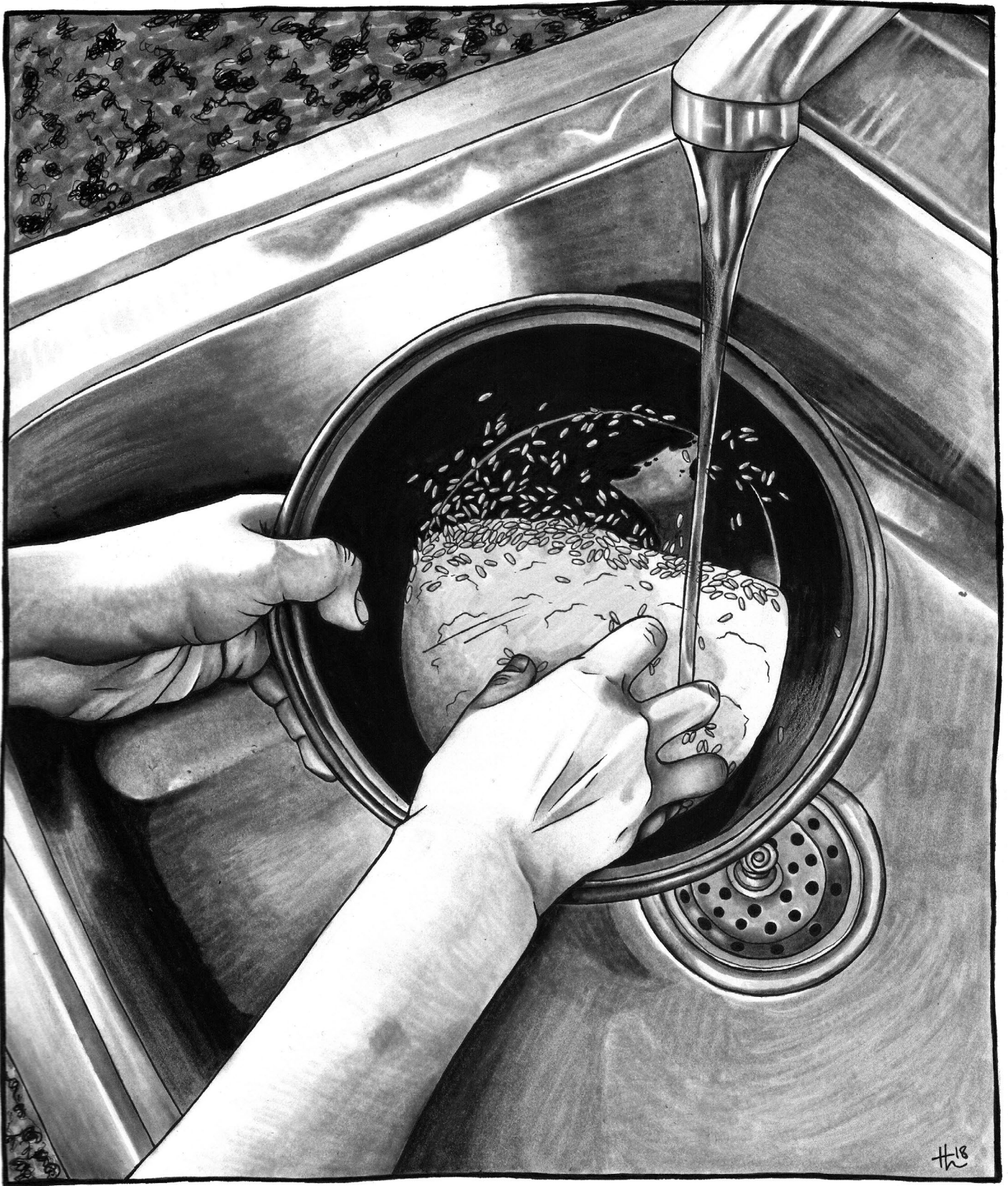
I sincerely appreciate how everyone below gave of themselves and encourage you to dig into the media, rituals, and stories from a place of curiosity and with your own work and knowledge in mind.

Siddharth Bharath Iyengar

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior & Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change Fellow, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

As a practice, I always greet any significant body of water when I meet it. If possible, I walk down to the edge and put my hand in. In the past year, whenever I’ve gone to a beach, I step ankle deep in the water, and do the pranaam we use in Ananya Dance Theatre’s practice of Yorccha. I do this greeting in part because I find myself very oriented to land and thinking from the terrestrial. This practice helps me decenter the terrestrial and think more of flows and connections in that moment.

As a reading, Robin Wall Kimmerer’s piece titled “Learning a Grammar of Animacy” in The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity, and the Natural World is short, beautiful, and not beholden to any academic jargon.



Washing Rice,” 2018. Image courtesy of [Tori Hong](#).

David Naguib Pellow

Dehlsen Professor of Environmental Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara

A suggested reading that I would offer as an invaluable tool for understanding the prison system and radical forms of resistance against its brutality is Victoria Law's book Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women. While it may not seem to be explicitly tied to environmental justice (EJ) struggles at first glance, if you sit with it and engage deeply with Law's writings and the words of the imprisoned women who speak throughout the book, you will make those linkages and generate new possibilities for transformative EJ practices concerning water and for every other terrain of the struggle.

Yuan Ding

Ph.D. Candidate in English, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Mohsin Hamid's How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia and Ruth Ozeki's A Tale for the Time Being. They are both great works that engage specifically with the water motif from an ecocritical point of view.

And of course, local poet and Macalester professor Wang Ping has been working on [environmental justice and water] for years and can be a fantastic resource.

Hyun Joo Oh

Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology, University of Toronto

"Fighting for Water and Democracy against the Neoliberal Flood," a 2016 interview with Anthropologist Andrea Muehlebach on water and democracy in Italy created by This is Hell: Manufacturing Dissent since 1996.

Also, *A Vital Politics: Water Insurgencies in Europe* by Andrea Muehlebach, currently in progress.

Robert Smith III

Program Officer, Thriving Cultures, at Surdna Foundation

Definitely this podcast: The City. It is very well done investigative journalism through a racial justice/environmental justice lens.

Senah Yeboah-Sampong

Writer & High School Paraprofessional born and based in Minneapolis

I earnestly believe that the film *Princess Mononoke* is a perfect place to open questions around physical, emotional, traumatic, institutional, and even gendered elements around violence in general, environmentalism in particular. I feel like I have to repeat the fact that I'm dead serious about this. The film saw a domestic theatrical release right after I completed the most in-depth research based presentation I'd ever done, on deforestation, and it really drove a lot of what I'd been learning home.

Sasha Suarez

Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

The first thing I thought of was the artwork of Lianne Charlie.

I also feel very strongly that a Nibi Walk, which is led by Anishinaabe elders, offers so much through the work they do in relation and responsibility to water.

신 선 영 辛善英 Sun Yung Shin

MAT, MFA, poet, healer, and educator

A book that is helping me understand the history on this land and water, and what it means to the Dakota, is *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota* by Gwen Westerman and Bruce White. It's not a water book, but Westerman says the direct translation of *Mni Sota Makoce* is "land where the water is so clear it reflects the sky." She says that is the version of the Dakota name used in the Treaty of 1851.

Karen Bauer

Ph.D. Student, Cultural Anthropology, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Anthropologist Zoe Todd's article "An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word For Colonialism" precisely illustrates the problems that occur from the practice of naming. In her article, Todd focuses on Euro-Western academics' recent desire to develop scholarship that thinks beyond the human, ignoring long-standing, critical Indigenous-led ontological scholarship.

Chika Kondo 近藤千嘉

Master's Student, Kyoto University Graduate School of Agriculture, Division of Natural Resource Economics

There are over 100 Japanese proverbs and sayings that center on water. I would like to share two.

我田引水

This is a proverb that means "putting everything to suit your own personal interests will lead to isolation." It originates from the idea that water is a shared resource: the village works together and therefore they irrigate each farmer's field; because it is a resource they will all use it is also something that the village works together to share and utilize. If someone selfishly diverts the water flow to just their own field, the surrounding fields will suffer and become a breeding ground for harmful insects and disease. Therefore, everyone in the village must work cooperatively to ensure that water can continue to serve its cyclical function. Even though there are only four characters to this proverb, there is so much behind the idea that we should not ever take water for granted or use it selfishly.

流れる水は腐らず

This proverb means that water that flows will never rot. It translates to "if you keep putting in effort and trying, there will always be progress." Water teaches us that we must never stop flowing. I always admire the great, beautiful boulders and tiny pebbles you find in the rivers— they become what they are, become their formation, because of flowing water. I hope that in my efforts to always practice and live out environmental justice (EJ), I will never stop moving.

A daily practice that anyone can do even if they are not by a body of water is to take a moment to drink water (hydration is vital to healthy bodies)

and give a small thanks. A thank you to knowing that the water you are drinking flowed through many channels and spirits and working hands of both people and nature.

Recommended Citation

Kang, Simi. 2019. "What Helps You Dream?" *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community*, no. 13. <http://editions.lib.umn.edu/openrivers/article/what-helps-you-dream/>.

About the Author

Simi Kang is a Doctoral Dissertation Fellow in the Feminist Studies Program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. A Sikh American educator, scholar, artist, and community advocate, she centers Asian/American stories and knowledges to interrogate the intersection of environment and policy. Kang's work has been supported in many ways big and small by her interlocutors in Louisiana and was funded by the UMN Graduate School and Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change. Her work has appeared in *The Asian American Literary Review*, *Gravy Quarterly*, *Hyphen Magazine*, *Kartika Review*, *Open Rivers: Rethinking Water, Place & Community*, and *Jaggery: A DesiLit Arts and Literature Journal*.