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## The Creek

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## The Creek *by Laurel Lamperd*

There was a creek across the road  
where we lived.

After the first rains  
it emerged from the high country  
rushing through the bush  
to vanish into flat land  
which became a swamp in winter.

In summer  
a chorus of frogs filled the air.  
Our parents cursed the mosquitoes  
lit insect coils  
and slept under nets.

We children  
made boats from the flat leaves  
of the eucalypt.  
The little bits of flotsam  
racing each other  
until caught in a protruding root  
the water had eroded.  
The sand drifts covered them  
next summer.

Once in those days  
when I played by the creek  
too far away for anyone to hear my cries.  
a man came out of the bush.  
He paused a moment  
to watch my boating tricks.  
Don't fall in, kid, he said  
and whistled to his dog  
who dug for rabbits nearby.

Today the creek is a storm drain  
fenced in from the housing estate  
encircled by a high fence.  
At night  
a guard patrols the boundary  
against intruders.