

## **Rannoch River**

My father wanted me to tell him about the Rannoch river  
how much it was rushing, how high its waters this winter  
and whether it still had that urgency it had last year,  
as if missing the river's long conversation.

My father down the crackling line from Glasgow  
to the one space where there's reception  
was keen to know if that tea-brown color was the same  
and if there were still gatherings of currents

Like comrades meeting, talking, never stopping;  
the river up here, miles away from my father  
still held its own old allure; to picture it running  
eloquent, articulate, certain, clear

Would add summers, winters past the age of eighty seven:  
the river—in his mind's eye mirror—as old friend  
still jiving, heading for the sea loch action  
the jitterbug, the slow waltz with Lochaline.

And further down catch the younger Dad on holiday  
on the Ferry from Craignure to Tobermory.  
Just to hear of it, still rushing, still running in its glory  
made it wide open, unending, our story.

*Jackie Kay*

*Atlanta Review* Spring/ Summer 2016