

River Games

The following is based on an episode from my mother's childhood.

He flaps open the letter box, and excitedly shouts:

“Are you in? Are you in? Are you coming out?”

The door swings ajar but her mother is there,

Smiling her mother smile, but he doesn't care,

“Is Marion coming out to play!”

“Sorry, love, not today, Marion's not well”.

And she smiles extra hard for she knows damn well

That this scrawny child lives a life of hell:

No father, no mother,

Hated and beaten by elder brother.

And now on her doorstep he's whining and crying,

“But we're going down to the river to play!”

“I'm so sorry, love, but not today”.

Burning hands clutch her aching head,

Her baking body sprawls over her bed,

Marion calls: “Was that David, going for a swim?”

I know you won't let me go with him, but I really want to go and play!

“No, Marion, love. No, not today.”

So much wind and so much rain has made the river turn beastly insane.

It's swirling round, and down, and out, and in,

Making a hellish, crashing, demonic din.

No chance, really, for a boy so thin,

A scrawny child, who can hardly swim.

They'd play in the river, nearly every day, but, luckily, Marion was ill that day,

The day her friend was swept away;

That day the river dragged him down,

Down,

Down,

To be drowned.

And later found by Marion's dad,

Swaying and praying,

Holding the boy who had cried then died,

Standing there in a river of grief,

Thanking God in waves of relief,

That Marion hadn't gone out to play, that day,

That the killer river hadn't washed his darling daughter

Away.

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