

# New Poetry by Loretta Tobin: “In the Dead Man’s Seabag” and “River City”



Condition River Shitty / *image by*  
*Amalie Flynn*

## **In The Dead Man’s Seabag**

On top of clean uniforms,  
his Bible rested,  
a well-worn photo  
of his wife and two sons,  
  
tucked inside with a letter—  
*We love you*  
*and miss you.*  
*Hurry home.*

A blue ribbon marked  
*First Thessalonians,*  
where he had underlined—  
*Be joyful always;*  
  
*pray continually;*  
*give thanks.*

## **River City**

As you wait  
for my promised letter,  
I count the slowly flooding

minutes of condition *river shitty*,  
like a meteorologist watching  
a crest stage gage, helpless  
to stem the overflow  
as it breaches. I can't reach  
through this void, extend  
my fingers to brush yours,  
can't lift and spin you in a hug.  
An AH-64 Apache helicopter  
encountered hostile fire,  
casualties confirmed.  
Waiting as the Army notifies  
next of kin, I thank God  
they're not coming to you.  
I pray for those in the way  
of fate, grateful my destiny,  
today, is only to make you wait.