

untranslatable: an analogy, perhaps

it is difficult to tell you
these words
in my language.

you listen, and hear,
but do not understand.

I say *water*, meaning *river*;
you hear *water*, meaning *rain*,
and glance, perplexed and anxious,
towards the cloudless sky.

you check the forecast,
test for wind,
estimate the humidity,
wondering why I speak of rain.

I repeat: *no, water*.

and again you are lost,
testing the pressure and temperature
of my bathroom faucets.

if I could tell you *river*, I would;
but you do not know this word,
these foreign syllables born
of strange tongue and alien lips.

and these words
are difficult enough to say to you
in my language;

I would not want to say them
in yours.

Susan Cormier