

## Two Poems



### **Gretchen McCroskey**

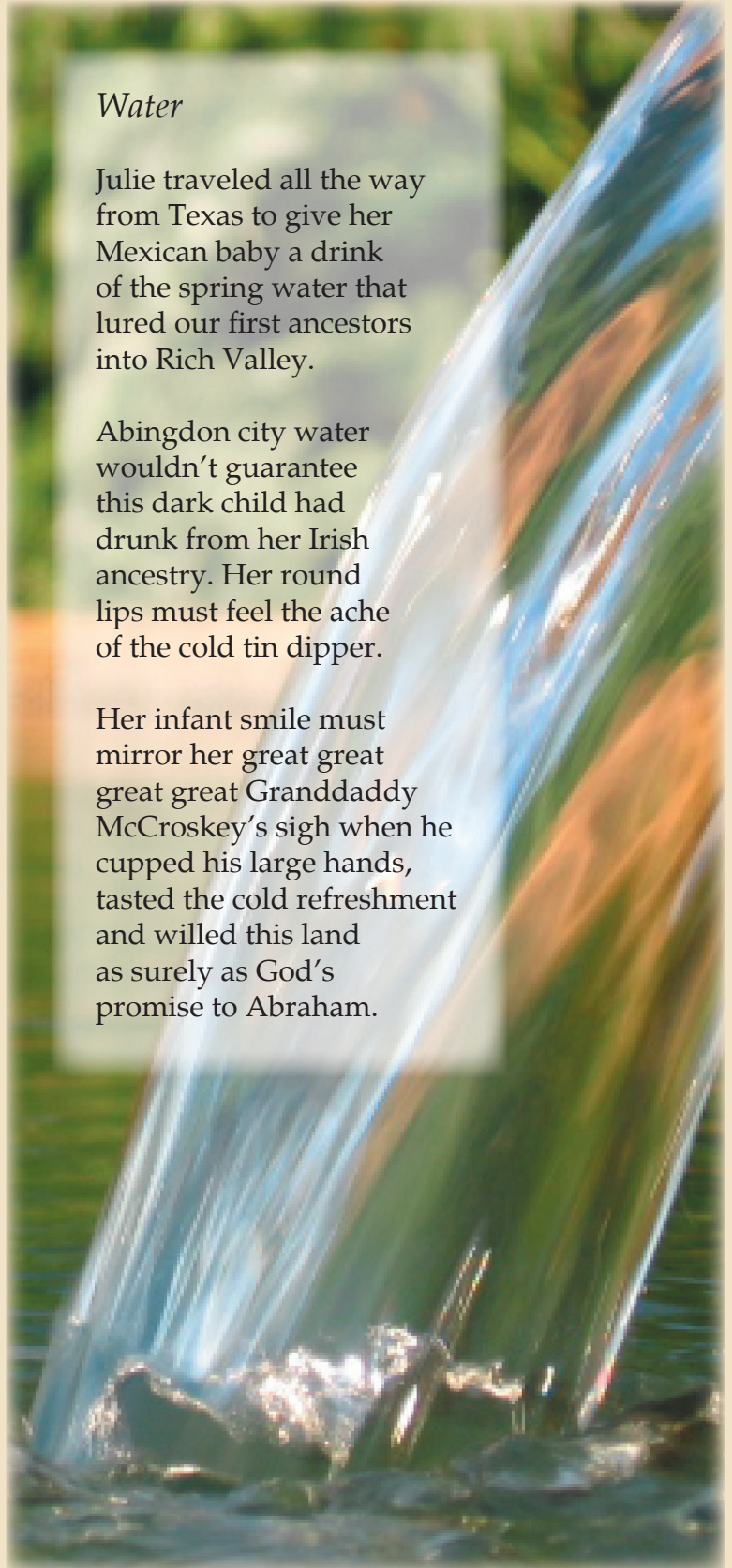
is associate professor of English at Northeast State Community College. Her poetry chapbook, **Finding My Way Home**, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2009.

### *Water*

Julie traveled all the way  
from Texas to give her  
Mexican baby a drink  
of the spring water that  
lured our first ancestors  
into Rich Valley.

Abingdon city water  
wouldn't guarantee  
this dark child had  
drunk from her Irish  
ancestry. Her round  
lips must feel the ache  
of the cold tin dipper.

Her infant smile must  
mirror her great great  
great great Granddaddy  
McCroskey's sigh when he  
cupped his large hands,  
tasted the cold refreshment  
and willed this land  
as surely as God's  
promise to Abraham.



*Sweepstakes Letters*

Letters  
written by complete strangers  
arrive officially dated and sealed  
making bona fide promises.

Dear Earnestine McDaniels,  
How would you like to move away  
from 114 Rockrose Road  
into the house of your dreams  
right there in Bristol, Virginia?  
If you respond in thirty days  
you may be moving away  
from 114 Rockrose Road  
into one of Bristol's most  
desirable neighborhoods.  
Suppose Bobby Johnson got that letter.  
Bobby's already made a fortune  
selling a patent for disposable car mats.  
Talking about insult! He's already moved  
into his dream home in the finest  
neighborhood. And he didn't get there  
by responding in thirty days.  
He got there by busting his butt,  
going to car dealerships  
in five states and making people  
believe in his product.  
What if Wayne Rasnick got one  
of them promise letters. Wayne's just  
said goodbye to his dream house  
in Country Club Estates because

he got sick of being closed in.  
Bought him 100 acres  
on a mountaintop so far out  
in the sticks he had to buy  
a jeep to climb the dirt road. That letter  
promises what Wayne's been  
trying to get away from  
for seventeen years.  
They better not send one of them letters  
to Mary Kilgore because she's  
so crippled up with rheumatism  
she had to give up her dream home  
and move into Greendale Retirement  
Village. The last thing she needs  
is property. She had to lie like  
the devil to get the government  
to pay their fair share  
of her nursing home bill.  
A fellow told me the other day  
about one of them letters  
coming to his wife Carrie  
who's been dead for ten years.  
You talking about raising Cain!  
Carrie would be doing it  
if she could get out of that  
ground. The very idea thinking  
anybody would want to leave  
Heaven to live in Bristol's  
finest neighborhood.