

November on the Ooligan River
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Today the Ooligan wears a cloak of grey mist
edged with the yellow of the turning maples
and the green of the dark dripping firs.
Today the Ooligan is full to the brim.
Alders stand with their feet submerged
and lift grateful arms.

I too am grateful
for the breaking of drought.
For the quickening of life: careful crowds
on the streets of my neighborhood.
For a glimpse of rainbow over the cliffs.

Today the Ooligan wears a cloak of silver rain
edged with gold and garnet: vine maple,
Oregon grape, elderberry.
The heron returns to his haunts.
Today the Ooligan smiles at the sky.

"Ooligan" is an alternate spelling for the Indigenous (Chinook) name for a species of fish once common in the Columbia River, which was then known as the Oragon. It is thought to be the origin of the name of the state of Oregon.