

On the Road to Hooper Island

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Days of rain puddle the shoulders
southwest of the refuge. Mist
thickens above the tidal swamps. Loblolly
pine stands give way to Fishing Creek,
narrow finger between Chesapeake
Bay and Hongo River, fat estuary.

Water pools in yards. Bay and river lap
the roadbed. Through the gauze
the arch of bridge emerges, bow
strung from water to water. We rise,
cross to Hooper Island, pass a scarce
string of houses, temporary islands,

where the road ends. Inches separate
land from sea as in the Everglades
or Amsterdam without dikes.
The sea level rises twice as fast
in the Chesapeake as elsewhere.
The SUV's tires splash through pavement

under water and Hooper Island settles
in mud, an illusion pausing on its way
to Atlantis, its stand of trees
like the road a momentary buffer
before the next hurricane adds
to the rising oceans, the slide of subsidence.

I blink and it disappears in the rain.