

JOSEPH BATHANTI

Postdiluvian: Mingo County, West Virginia

The day dawns repentant,
sky blue. Union Mission

hauls in food and blankets, toys.
Pigeon Creek, now slaked,

plumb in its banks, yet still flexing
at its gouged shoulders, is sick—

green-brown in clefs of sunlight—
dull as a gorged serpent.

Too much to drown,
after more mine-rain runoff

than Mingo tribal land would suffer,
its breach was obscene—massing

diluvia bent on blood feud.
Sycamores snapped in tandem.

Roil stormed the house, cleaved
its seams and sockets, white

shakes skived in coils from its face—
the Pigeon in the children's room,

counterpanes of water
draping spinet and chifferobe.

The roof caved the porch.
The saltbox jackknifed, joists

gone for tinder. A good house—
swamped, then sundered,

vitals bared, the yard
washed off to Pike County.