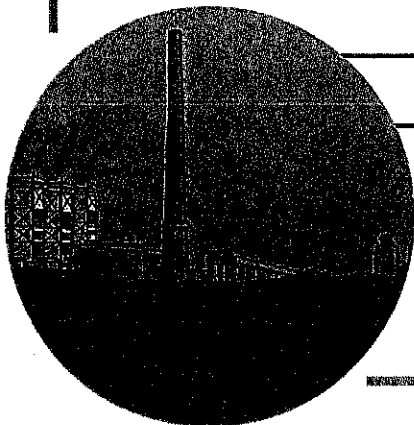


I can write about the journey of a river.

Have you ever speculated about what the journey of a river involves? It is convoluted and miraculous with a host of natural features occurring along its path down to the sea.

Upper Course

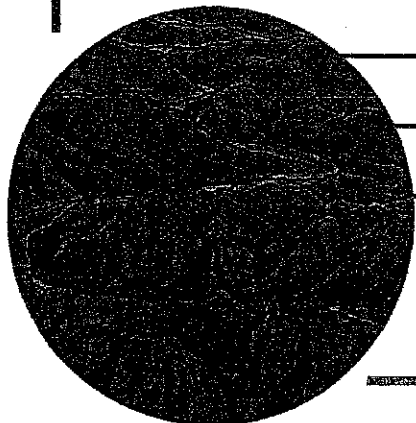
Rivers first begin with rainfall, primarily on the highest peak of the mountain. This inception is known as the source which is the beginning of the upper course. Since it travels vertically as it flows down the mountains, waterfalls are created. These are a product of erosion processes, where softer rock is worn away by hydraulic action, leaving a shelf of harder rock behind.



As the contents of the river descend at speed through the air, they fall on to the ground below, creating a plunge pool. A plunge pool is a fathomless hole. It is created by heavy rocks which fall from the ledge above creating a bowl-shaped hole. Gorges may be located in the Upper course too. These incredible gashes in the landscape occur over time as the river cuts through the rock in a vertical motion. The river then arrives at its next destination:

The Middle Course

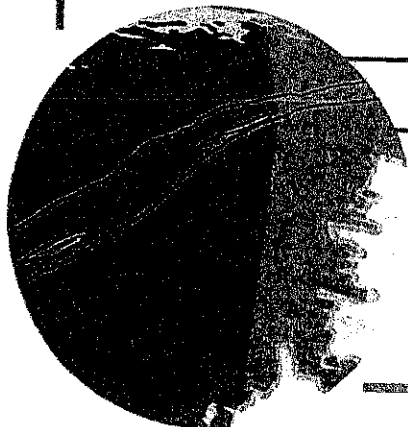
This section of the river's voyage includes meanders which arise where the river bends and twists. Occasionally, they are forced to change shape, when the river deposits alluvium, altering the



course of the river. Oxbow lakes are the result. The meander has become separated from the river and the velocity of the water slows down. The ground is more level here and we might see floodplains, where the water from the river has space to overflow following heavy rainfall. Tributaries - smaller rivers - join the main river and meet at a 'fork' known as the confluence. As the ground continues to level out, we arrive at the Lower Course:

Lower Course

In this final section, levees may appear. These relatively common features are embankments which help to prevent the river from flooding. Sometimes they are manmade in order to protect land



and buildings but can also occur naturally. Deltas, which are small islands in the middle of the river, are a regular feature in the lower course. They are the result of deposition: the river has slowed down to such an extent that it is now off-loading vast loads of debris.

The river is now at its widest - this section is referred to as the estuary - and it arrives at its final destination as it reaches the mouth of the sea or ocean.

By Victoria Doroszczuk

