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Mavi Hamali

The River Nith



Writers' Walks

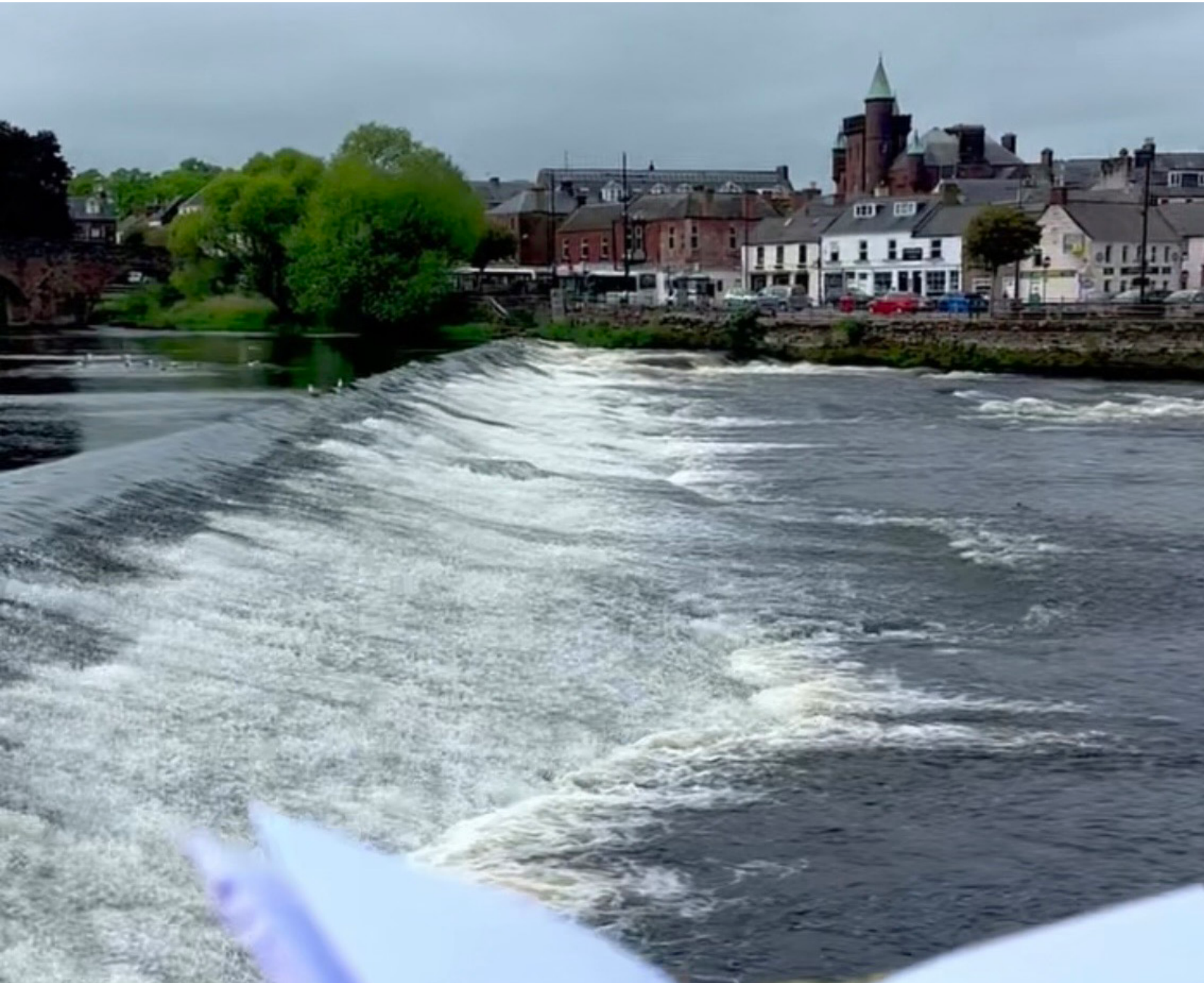


Mavi Hamali

I am Mavi, a Turkish Ebru artist living in Dumfries. The landscape of Dumfries and Galloway has become a quiet but constant source of inspiration for my work – the colours of the hills, the light on the water, the textures I find on walks all find their way into my art.

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Writers' Walks



River Nith path, beginning at Devorgilla Bridge and following the west bank south towards the Nith Weir.

Distance: Approximately 1.5 km (one way)

Walking time: Around 20–30 minutes

Difficulty: Easy; mostly level riverside paths suitable for most walkers.

Best time to visit: Beautiful throughout the year, especially after rainfall or during autumn.

Pause

Stand in the middle of Devorgilla Bridge.

Look upstream.

Think of something you wish to remember.

Then turn downstream.

Think of something you are ready to leave behind.

Take a slow breath.

Then continue your walk.

Between Two Rivers

I grew up beside a river that refused to follow the rules.

The Orontes – known in Turkish as the Asi, meaning ‘rebel’ or ‘defiant’ flows through Antakya, the ancient city where I was born. It is one of the few rivers in the world that runs from south to north, quietly resisting the direction of those around it. As a child I never thought this was remarkable. I only knew that after heavy rain it gathered strength, swelling beyond its banks until the whole city felt its presence. Standing beside it meant standing beside something alive.

When I moved to Dumfries, I wasn’t looking for another river.

But the Nith found me before I realised I needed one.

There is something familiar in its rhythm. On still mornings it drifts with quiet certainty; after rain it speaks with urgency. Most days I follow its western bank from Devorgilla Bridge towards the weir, and somewhere along that walk I notice I have become lighter than when I began.

On the bridge, I stop.

I always stop.

First, I turn upstream and watch the water coming towards me. That is where I find the things that still belong to my past: the city I left, familiar streets, voices I no longer hear, the people who live now only in memory. I do not push them away. I let the river bring them back to me, just for a while.

Then I turn downstream.

There I place the things I no longer wish to carry.

Grief, sometimes.

Uncertainty.

The quiet weight of questions that have no answers.

I never ask the river to take them.

I simply stand there until they no longer feel entirely mine.

When I finally lift my eyes, St Michael’s churchyard lies ahead of me, while behind me the old riverside trees reach skywards, season after season. Between them, I find myself standing between endings and continuations, loss and growth. That view reminds me, every single time, how brief our lives are—and how important it is to inhabit them fully.

On the way back, I always touch the trees.

If a leaf has fallen, I pick it up.

Not as a souvenir, but as a quiet reminder that change is part of belonging.

Perhaps that is why I keep returning.

Not because the river changes.

But because, somehow, each time it changes me.

The River Nith has taught me the same lesson that Ebru has taught me for years: water cannot be forced. It asks only that we arrive with patience, attention, and the willingness to let it move.