



## Section 8: Brownville Park

Beside a branch, Missy floats under the bridge for Brownville Road. Just south of it is Brownville Park. She watches a woman and a teenage girl in kayaks.

“Remember the time when the water was so low?” the woman asks.

“We had our canoe then. I was very young,” her daughter says.

“It was a drought. Didn’t we have to get out and walk across the sandy places?”

“But it wasn’t sandy, Mom. It was yucky. We sank in up to our knees.”

The mother laughs. “I do remember. We were so happy to find some deeper water to wash that muck off our legs.”

Soon they are far away. Missy floats along the west shore. Vines with heart-shaped leaves seem to smother the trees. On the vines are small growths that look like brown potatoes. The vines make a dense shade, so no other plants grow beneath them. Above, a panther naps on a thick oak branch.

Missy dives in the river. She surfaces at the center where a bald cypress grows. Crowded around the base of the tree are cypress knees. Part of the root system, they may help support the tree in the water. A plastic bottle, filled with sand and water, is wedged there. Many creatures hide here. As a minnow slips past her, Missy grabs and eats it. Then she moves south with the river.