

Score for Nine Mile Run Viewfinder at 903 West Street

40.444585, -79.890060

From the corner of Penn Ave and West Street,
Walk south toward the big brick building on the West side of West Street,
Outside the entrance to Wilkinsburg's Magisterial Court,
Look for the Viewfinder in the sidewalk

Can you see or hear water?

You may be able to see the brick tunnel that holds the stream

AKA a culvert

a transverse drain¹

a drain or channel crossing under a road, sidewalk, sewer; conduit.²

a tunnel carrying a stream, diverting it under a road or rail³

Because of this culvert's shallow depth, when the storms are big,
Nine Mile Run will rise and flood the street

Imagine this stream running

Running through Wilkinsburg without being confined:

Cutting through a yard, crossing an intersection, a street, a sidewalk.

Water finding its way

The stream was buried in the 1930s to create space and improve sanitation conditions:

a single pipe system designed to carry away waste and stormwater to be diluted in streams and rivers

Though the rivers became so polluted with raw human waste that a new system had to be created

Let us honor the water, the storm that becomes stream, the stream a river

As well as the waste our bodies produce and imagine even newer systems to

honor both, as separate, necessary life givers

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culvert>

² <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/culvert>

³ <https://nmrwa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=a482e5433f3c44ee9de6628d37fd0b2f>