Bozeman Creek

Greg Keeler
BOZEMAN CREEK

It starts up in the Hyalites where elk dab their tongues and run quick on rocks down through farms sparse then thick to developments then town. All of this in ten miles packs history to an instant lesson where the pupils are awed by the teacher's knowledge but never learn.

The fast water moves to undercut meadows to parks then beneath pavement, buildings, old houses, railroad tracks, then out to join the slower streams and rivers rip-rapped with broken concrete and old cars.

In town the law leaves fishing to the children, so they learn best. One might drift a worm under the tire store, the Eagles Bar, the bank parking lot, the old hotel and catch brook trout: pale, thin memories of cutthroats that lie upstream or prophesies of survival in rough German browns that burrow downstream in the carcasses of rusted out cars.

One spring the stream took two girls fresh from drink at the Eagles and pulled them under downtown Bozeman where they died.
in the range of those dim brook trout.

It is spring again and the water comes cold, hard and fast from where the elk dips to where these ghosts hold firm in the current under the old hotel waiting for the children.