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## Bozeman Creek

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## 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 prophecies 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.