Spring 1993

Reunion on the Northfork

Kevin Miller
Kevin Miller

Reunion on the Northfork

This November winter pansies make as much sense as a car that runs. A wall of leafless blackberries covers a field and hides pheasant. In Fristad's neglected orchard, windfall apples spoil three black bear. A dying wife smokes knowing the smoke won't kill her. Four men walk the dry path of Racehorse Creek to the Nooksack's bank. They kick rocks in a fall so dry salmon carve angels in stone. No answers rise from barren beds and the spawn red creeks they recall. One man uses fish as his hook to force words where no one wants to go. Another man feels the cold minestrone at Graham's is his fault. No one blames the girl who looks like the man in the kitchen. She deftly ladles and chats. McGahern says 'She was as far from ugly as she was from beauty,' and they smile as she praises them for bussing their dishes. Four men pack into the small car. They drive Road 37 past the snowline. They set foot in winter and return like the boys who teased the dog, boys who no longer believe they have escaped for good, for good is measured differently, like beauty, apples and smoke.