Fish Story

Paul Zarzyski
That day I cried “Andy! Andy! The net! Get the net!”
little did I know my voice
would carry above the pounding Bitterroot
West Fork rapids to you
far down stream. Like that miracle
rainbow surfacing out of the black
to vacuum up my Muddler,
you came busting ass through brush
and stumbling—net in hand—
down the rocky bank. For breakfast
you ate the whole two-pounder,
then held its skeleton up
glistening to your grin
for picture proof. I’m yelling,
yelling to tell you it happened again,
partner, Dick and me on Brown’s Lake,
my Fenwick bent in half and the big ’bow
parting water like something straight
out of a Hemingway deep-sea
yarn—to tell you this whopper
snapped my line at the reel and had me
scrambling for nylon. Hand-to-hand
I fought and fought him
until my strangled fingers
finally coaxed the monster
in close. I’m telling you
I hollered all the while, “Andy!
Andy! Get the net!” telling you
I gave the fish to Dick,
whose quick sweep saved the day,
and made him swear
he’d keep the bones for proof.