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## Bushkill Creek

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*Owen McLeod*

## Bushkill Creek

On Bushkill Creek, a version of me meets me.  
Everything's arranged, except for what to say  
after thirty years. In the made-for-TV version,  
there's a montage of father and son, reunited  
at last, reeling in the fish, lounging on the bank,  
frying the day's catch over an intimate campfire.  
In reality, I'm clueless about fishing. My father,  
an old pro, has to loan me a pair of waders.  
We slog out to the middle of the creek  
that weaves through my town. I'm startled  
by the water's depth, not to mention its chill.

Neither of us asks the only question to ask.  
My father defaults to the language he knows—  
mayflies, nymphs, the cunning of brown trout—  
while I burn through half a dozen ill-fitting roles.  
Nothing is caught. We split a cheese sandwich  
on the tailgate of his truck. Suddenly, time is up.  
My father asks for the best way to the interstate,  
so I draw him a map on a mustard-stained napkin.  
We shake hands and mumble of meeting again.  
A buzzard circles overhead, descends—then rises  
and drifts away after seeing we're just two men.