

Looking Down

by John Cantey Knight

Half-way up the mountainside
I search for brook trout as I
stumble over rocks to test
pools the size of washbasins.
My line is tossed rather than cast,
with night crawlers and crickets
preferred temptations. If I catch
one that's a foot, my day is made.

Sure, I thrill to big rainbows
and bigger browns
that inhabit the deep holes
and slower streams below. Now
and then, they hit hard, rip
water, before catapulting into air.
I'd be proud to hold one
as another records my glory.

But mostly, those fishing
the flattened water
that widens in the valleys
must find their limit in the lack
of fight of a hatchery's
release. Looking down,
the thread of broadening silver
doesn't diminish my release.

Here, I'm nearer the pinnacle.
Up high, I tempt the pastel
beauties that challenge the sky.
Natives measured in inches
aren't much hundreds of feet
below, but from where
I catch my breath, there's no
other measure.