

# Fish

Whenever I walk across the iron bridge at Stony Run, I look for the fish. Sometimes there are a few gray slivers wagging in the slender current, amongst the didymo and water striders. Other times I see no fish at all and I wonder if perhaps something bad has happened, perhaps a sewer overflow, to chase the fish away or kill them. And sometimes, as today, there are many, many fish, thick brown bunches of creek chub, the smaller dace stringing the stones with gold, the white shiners shining.

It's a mysterious thing to see a fish—it puts me in a reverie. My brain, if only for a second or a so, goes still. The sound of the riffles or of the leaves trembling in the trees above sharpens and clarifies. I hear better, more distinctly, and my eyes see things I haven't before: the bluish crumble of clay at the bank or the shards of a ceramic pipe.

We know that Jesus is a fish—the ichthys on your neighbor's car—and we know that Jonas was swallowed by one. We've seen the Tao of black fish with white eye curled tight to the white fish with black eye. And we might read that Matsya the merman rescued humanity from the great deluge.

Everyone says that no one cares about your dreams but this is the dream I remember best:

I'm digging with a garden spade in a field of tall grass. The day is bright and the grass is yellow. About three feet down I uncover a box, about the size of a jewelry box and made of hammered metal. The box holds a cupful of water, clean and sweet and cold. In the dream I sense the dream is in the box and that in the dream I swim.