**Fish Kicker**

Lazy Sunday afternoon

We stretched reptilian on the rocks

And bore witness as two fish escaped from the boy.

The third rose thrashing from the river

And when the line swung close

His heavy boot with rounded toe and tassle

Met it in the air.

The noise from me

My belly

My nose

Was pressed instantly into my shirt

So he would not hear

Because I could not decide if laughing was the appropriate response

To the kicking of a fish.

“Issa Peckeril,” the boy hollered from across the slow water,

“I ain’t doin’ it justa be mean. It’ll eat up allyer good fish.
Got a nasty mouthful of teeth too.”

Our elbows perched us above the igneous plane as

the fish slid

 slightly wiggling into the reedy grass

and was stomped hard

One

Two

Three times

Before it soared through the air again

To meet that heavy boot.

Again

My face pressed into my shirt

As the children scrambled to see where the fish has gone

Dead fish float

This fish sank

White blur beneath the current

I have never seen anyone drop kick a fish.

And I, in my reptilian, lazy, laughing ignorance

Am torn between the justice of an animal

And the wisdom of the mountain people

Who very well may be saving the waters

From pestilence.