

"Going Fishing"

by Robert D. Wetmore

The milk train ran through Gardner
Past South Royalston headed west to Athol
Echoes of my past as a teen I'd ride my bike
But in the summers getting up at dawn
I'd walk to the train station platform in Gardner
Where you paid a nickel for the men's room

I'd wait for the milk train
A book bag stuffed with a can
Of worms, fishing gear, sandwich
And canteen slung over my shoulder
Waiting for the train waiting to go fishing...

All aboard, seated, a window's view
Chugging past woods, crossing the Otter River
To the South Royalston Depot
I'd disembark at a stone's throw
From the Millers River Dam rapid waters
Cool pools, wooded tannin stained, clouded
From the northern reaches of headwaters
Fish pole and bait I'd wait for a nibble then walk
Along the rail road track, sun beating down
As I searched for the perfect spot

Drafted in my twenties, boated to South Korea
With army backpack, boarded trains then back
Home again I grabbed my pole and fishing gear
Rode in my brother's borrowed car back
To the South Royalston fishing spots now
Choked with pollution run-off from paper mills

Then and there I changed, got into politics
So the rivers might flow clean and pure
And the fish might be worth fishing for

In March 2013 Bob entered the poem *Going Fishing*, a stream of consciousness memory of fishing before and after his service in the Korean War, in the Miller's River Watershed Council poetry contest.