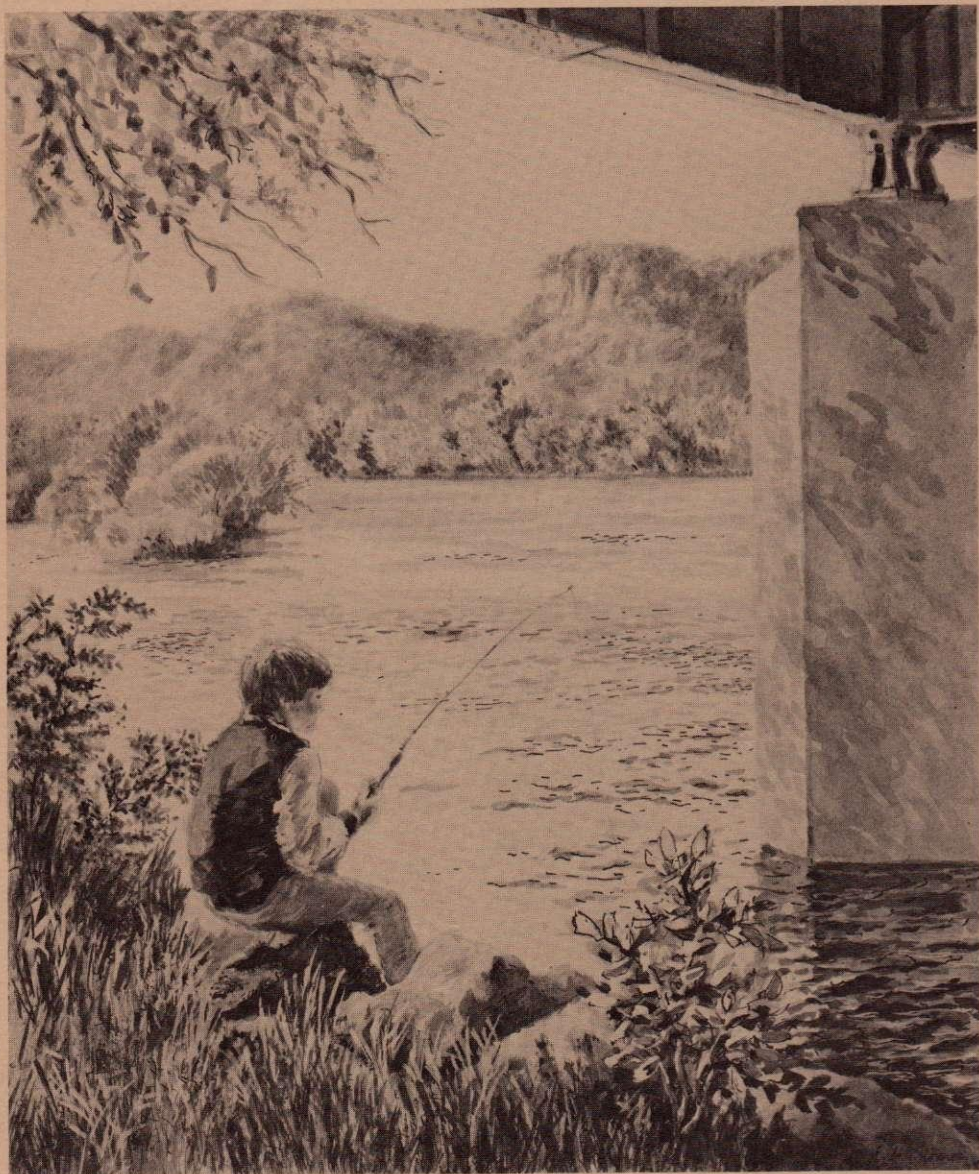


GREAT RIVER REVIEW



DON'T GO NEAR THE EDGE

Staggering butterflies blind.
Dangerous skytraced motions
twist the mortician eyes loose
from their instaring;
the world takes on fluttering.
 Don't go near the edge.
You might fall, freefall like your dreamself
to a bedspring jingling conclusion.
 "Don't go near the edge,"
the voices monkey chatter
from the repetitious windows
in the samed in concrete structures
in the same and concrete words:
"Creations create . . .
 Don't go near the edge."

But those damn staggering butterlives,
nightdeepdiving skybirds after them,
sunset pinking the whole whorl with confusion.
Dangerous: you might see your blood
in the red mudpuddle,
might find your eyes on the wingcolors
of a moth.
Don't go near them.

Even night's not safe.
Moths bound around streetlights.
We hire yellow bulbs to keep them away.
The crazy white madness tempts.
Don't go near them. They'll edge you further
into the meaningless plan.
They'll edge you into yourself's selves.
They throw their lives into hot deaths
for the sake of the planned fall
fluff to the ground.
Trapped, you'll hear them
scream
and explode in a dust cloud,

near the edge:
will you recognize in the wingwilt
of the downed mothcorpse of morning
the exhaustion of the saint . . . ?
Or plot the crazed course
of the worldmad wings
on quadruded paper?
You have both eyes.
 Don't go near the edge.
You're playing with your life.

WE ALMOST CAUGHT THE TURNING

We had the time
to motion a part of the edge
to stop its wriggling.

Obeying, it ceased,
and the beginning was that edge.

We took a quasar's pulse
and wondered if it would live.
There was the question of life at all,
until we discovered ourselves.

Beside a nightstand,
the unabridged prayerbook
opened itself to an astronomical page
when the six numbers parted
a red season.

We almost caught the turning.

Then the pulse quickened, faded,
and the edge reappeared, unopened again.