



the fall creek was once something like a fable
to all those lucky enough to live near it
naming our middle schools, our winding roads, our little league fields
but still forgotten as a hidden feature of this land

i almost forgot the fall creek was a real thing
where strung together dirt stories could stick like mud
where politics were fallen leaves on the banks that set the stage
for storytelling of the days when every backyard led back to this place

if only you walked far enough
and weren't afraid of the trees.
if a writer is a historian in any way
at least let me memorialize this place to say that our muddy water is more than enough

but fall creeks don't have glittering names like lakes do
fall creeks don't drip transparently off the tongue
fall creeks upheld only through word and action
every time you say its name

unlike lakes beating within themselves
maxinkuckee or wawasee rolling over in their own reflection
full with fizzy content
and people dissolved with miles, swimming where they can see themselves

creeks
are murky and creeks are brown
creeks go under bridges where it's dark
and stretch through woods where houses make you play outside & leave the screen door closed

for all those so blessed to see their lives carried in them
for all those who forgive.
creeks cradle stories downstream
and remind us of why we love the places we call home

and isn't that all we can ask of them?
has fall creek not earned its keep?
our water is all sacred

"The Fable of Fall Creek"

By Alyssa Marie Gaines

First-ever National Youth Poet Laureate from Indiana (2022)

Inaugural Indianapolis Youth Poet Laureate (2019) - a program of VOICES (see voicescorp.org)



and must be funded so that we can see our zip code
our city
our state in its reflection

our love cannot only be for the indiana we don't need to keep beautiful
the indiana that is privately funded and maintained
and progressively postcard
we cannot uphold only the places we geotag

anything unsuitable for a lake vacation
becoming water under a bridge
mythicized and memorable in the way we remember how it runs

our environment
in this state
is for farmers and for workers
and for all those who name the creeks they live near by keeping them alive in stories and speech
by calling out a moniker and waiting for the water to appear

for every hoosier with a story rooted in some feature of land
cornfield, cataract, or creek
we must keep our homestate clean
honoring the places that know our stories and hold our dreams

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