

Fishing with My Father in Minnesota--Bonita Underbaake

As told by Bonita Underbake
Preston, Minnesota

Story Narrative:

"I was raised on old McDonald's farm, halfway between Watson and Preston, and we'd drive like a mile and half all the way to Watson Creek. And father would lead us. He'd take one of the polls and he'd put the hook on it, and I could pick out the worm, and he'd put the hook into the water, and he left me there. And, I knew that this was how you go fishing, and you be still so that you don't scare the fish and watch your bobber. And it was shady and comfortable and he'd go a ways upstream and he'd drop off another brother, same routine. He'd take the littlest brother with him.

And then, we would be fishing, and we would need to be still. We could hear the birds. We could hear the tree branches rubbing on each other. We could hear the combined music of all the insects because there were many insects. And it was, we belonged there, and the art of the whole being safe and being whole. Before we were tired or hungry, father would start reversing the process. He would pick my brothers from their spots, and our little caravan would head back to the car and back home and put the things away, and the worms got thrown back into the garden.

I don't remember anybody ever catching a fish! But we did learn how to listen and look and notice and be part it, be part of that good world that had Watson Creek with its clear water and its rippling sounds around the roots of the trees. Where is Watson Creek? If you're going North out of Preston, on the east side is a campground now, on your left will be the auction and then you'll go down, and at the bottom of that down is just an innocuous concrete bridge now, used to be a visible bridge, and that's Watson Creek."

This story was collected as part of a collaborative effort to record the state of American lakes, rivers, and waterways as well an attempt to uncover what water means to Americans. Listen to other stories recorded by storytellers from Lanesboro, Minnesota, for the "Be Here: Main Street" project on the [Be Here: Lanesboro channel](#) on SoundCloud.

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