

SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE FLY SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE FLY SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE FLY

***HUGE ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



FUNGUS
AMONGUS

CRITTER GITTER
BROOK TROUT MOON
FLY EVOLUTION
TOP OF THE WORLD
CLOWNSHOE
CLIMATE
FANCY FIDDLER
MONTANA HOMELESS
HAIKU



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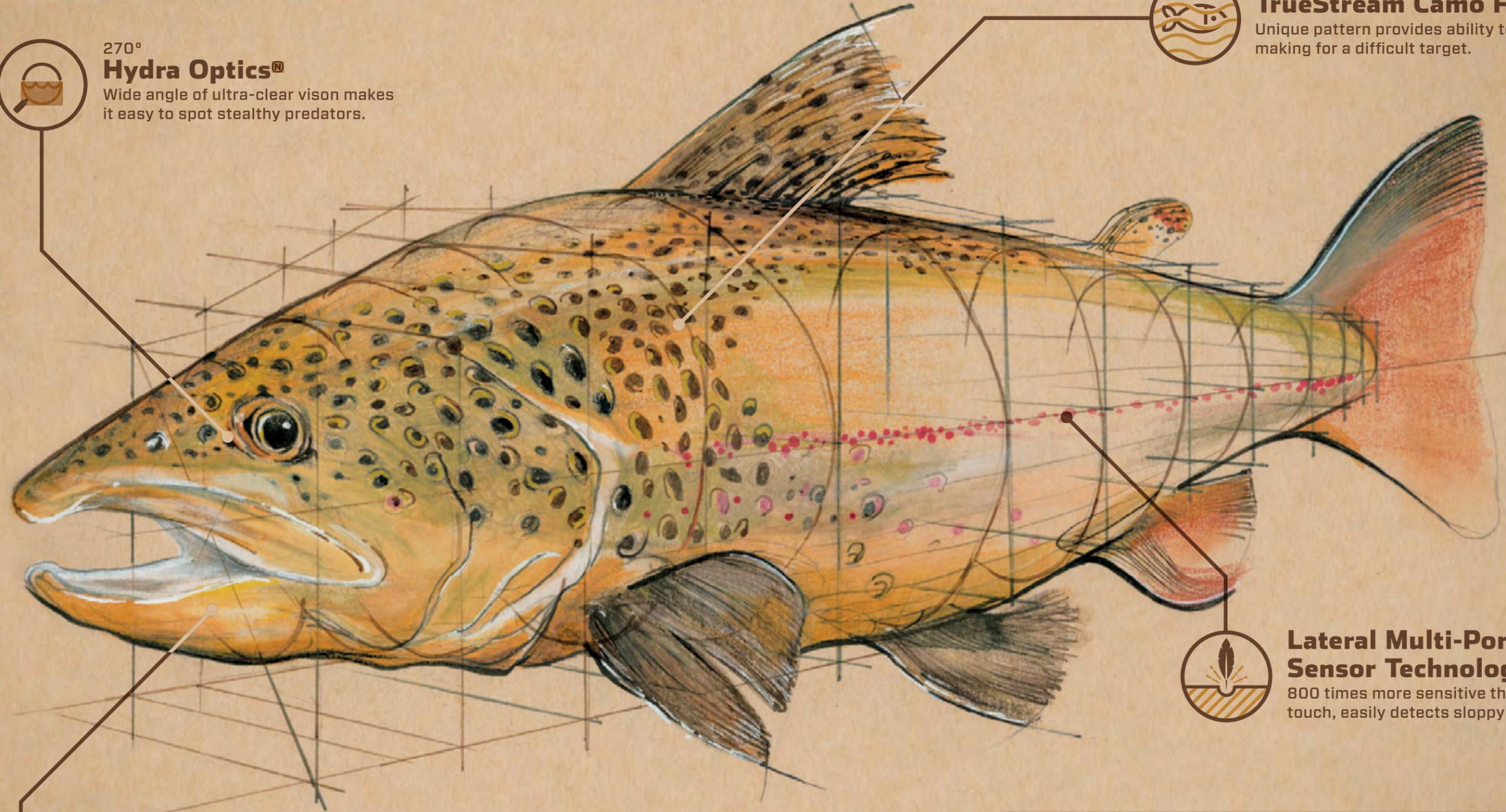
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SCOF Fall Fluffer

Photo: Indian River Lagoon, FL - August 2018, Steve Seinberg



Photo: Nolichucky River, TN - July 2018, Rand Harcz



Photo: Indian River Lagoon, FL - August 2018, Steve Seinberg



Photo: Watuaga River, TN - October 2018, Rand Hartz

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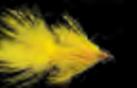


Location: Argentina

Water Type: Jurassic Lake

Fly: Yellow Yummy Rubber Legs Size 6

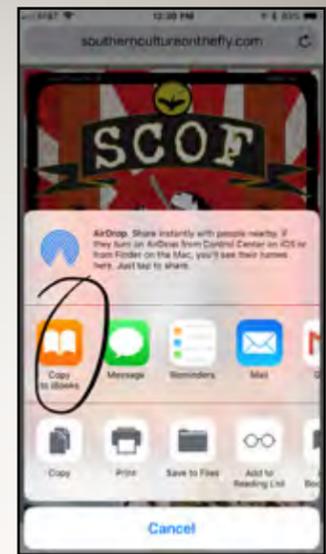
Rod: 890-4 IGNITER





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S.C.O.F
FALL 2018
ISSUE NO. 29
FUNGUS AMONGUS

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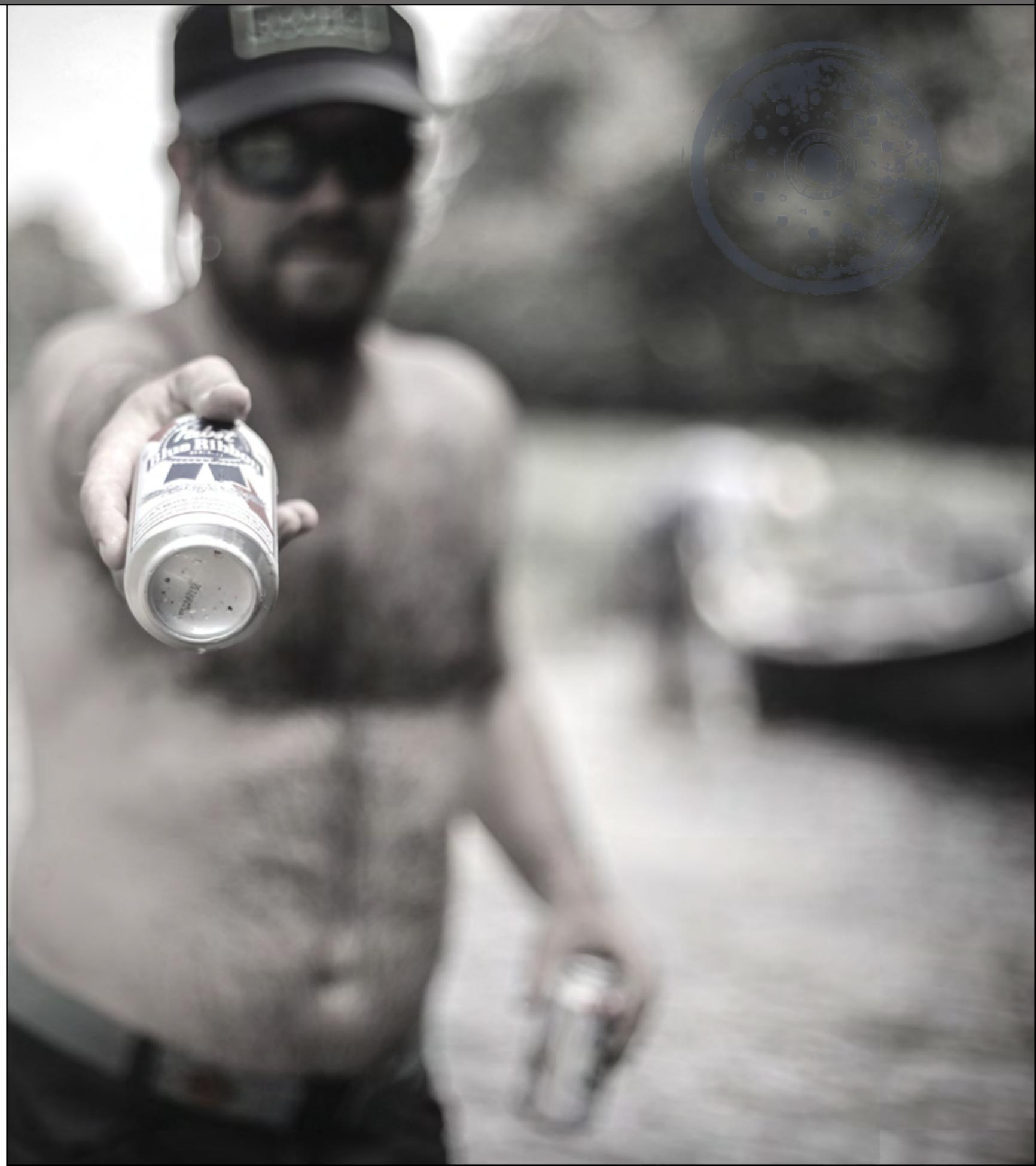
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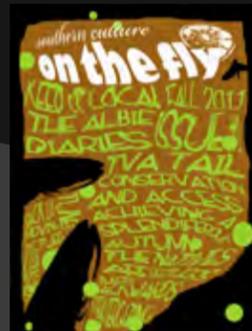
Fall 2018

By the time this issue hits the digital presses, I'll have flipped the page on my 40th year. I should be dead soon. I tried joining AARP—they rejected me based on some sort of anti-semitic nonsense about “50 and over.” I bought myself a walker for the river. It has tennis balls on the bottom. I covered it in stickers. I've switched over to mostly soft foods, better for the inevitable dentures. If you see me pull a bag of mush out of my pocket while we're fishing, don't stare. That's just what I eat now. Please don't call me anymore after, let's say 5:15 pm. I'll be asleep until 4 am. I'll call you right when I get up. I had my son install grab bars on all my boats. They were installed poorly. He's only nine. From now on I will insist on fly fishing dry flies no matter how grossly inappropriate it is for the conditions. This includes all salt water situations. I have gone back to wearing a vest while fishing. It is heavy, made out of mesh and has various pins and patches attached from the places I have bought pins and patches from. There are now flip-down magnifiers on all my hats, which also have various pins attached. (Pins are like stickers for the elderly.) I can longer handle the weight of

my rubber net, so I have procured a fine wood and twine net that's grossly undersized for the fishing I do. I like the fish to look big in the picture I take with my brick-like silver point-and-shoot. Zoom seem confusing to me now, and all my pictures are poorly composed with partial thumbs as the waypost for my imminent internment. If we happen to be fishing together and a smell floats across the breeze as if someone has fouled themselves, that was me. I pooped my waders. I don't care, I'm old now. Also I have procured a fine set of neoprene waders and canvas boots. They are horribly uncomfortable. They are also full of my own bodily waste. I wear them year-round. On the first day of delayed harvest trout season, I called my local fly shop eight times to find out the stocking schedule. They told me the schedule eight times. I called again. I have bought a Cadillac and put Florida plates on it. I am not physically a resident of Florida, but spiritually and chronologically, I'm already there. I am now 40, and all that is left for me are dry flies and death, and I can't even tie on my own dry flies anymore.



Defining Everything that Matters



NO. 1
FALL 2011



NO. 2
WINTER 2012



NO. 3
SPRING 2012



NO. 4
SUMMER 2012



NO. 5
FALL 2012



NO. 6
WINTER 2013



NO. 7
SPRING 2013



NO. 8
SUMMER 2013



NO. 9
FALL 2013



NO. 10
WINTER 2014



NO. 11
SPRING 2014



NO. 12
SUMMER 2014



NO. 13
FALL 2014



NO. 14
WINTER 2015



NO. 15
SPRING 2015



NO. 16
SUMMER 2015



NO. 17
FALL 2015



NO. 18
WINTER 2016



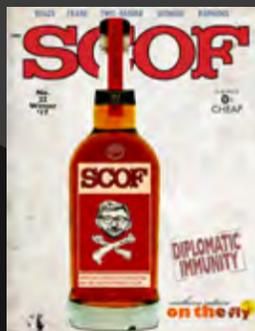
NO. 19
SPRING 2016



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FALL 2016



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WINTER 2017



NO. 23
SPRING 2017



NO. 24
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To The People of Tennessee

Re: The Dildos



T

Dear Neighbors of Tennessee,

We, on this side of the mountain, truly enjoy fishing your very fertile waters. Your rivers and lakes harbor trout, musky, and bass that we not only covet, but care for deeply—some of us even more than our own tar heel varieties. We share the water, beers, lies, and a love for these mountains. With all of this common ground, we consider y'all family (like rowdy cousins from the other side). And as family, I think it's time we talk. We've noticed over the past couple of years an alarming trend in your backyard. Dildos, Tennessee. Dildos. Note the plural here. In the past two years, we've found at least five dildos in your waters. Five. The first one near McMinnville came with a strap attached. We raised our eyebrows, but what you do in the privacy of your own homes is none of our business. (Even if it is some really kinky shit.) Then another one and another one. By the time the pictured specimen was found in the Nolichucky this summer, we decided it was time for a chat. What's going on here, Tennessee? I've never found a dildo in a stream in North Carolina, only on your side of the line. Why is that? Dildos don't grow feet, and walk from the bedside

table to the river, do they? Y'all have been throwing them in there, and at an alarming rate. I feel like it's not plausible to think you're just driving down the road with a dildo in the passenger seat, happen to see a bridge and say, "Hey, I should throw my dildo out the window." No, these are planned abandonments of your dildos. Why? You don't have to be ashamed for owning a dildo, but you do have to stop throwing them in the water. I'm quite sure that a dildo will freak fish out. It certainly freaks us out. Why can't you dispose of your dildos in the trash like normal people? Sometimes we just don't get you. So I think what we're trying to say here is if you guys are into dildos, that's okay. None of our business. Let's just maybe dispose of them in a way that we, on this side of the mountain, don't have to keep finding them when we're fishing. That's fair, right? Maybe we change that UT orange to a nice non-offensive beige while we're at it. Too far? Okay.

Sincerely,
Your brothers from another
mother in NC



BOOKING 2019 NOW





Brook Trout on the Moon

By Jason Tucker
Photos: Louis Cahill



They say there are brook trout on the moon. Neil Armstrong didn't talk about it, but he fished for them. If you look really close in those grainy videos, just over his shoulder you can see streams in the mountains in the distance.

To get there, you must climb back into your lunar module and take off for the dark side of the moon, and land in a spot called Georgia. Then you drive north into the Smokies. You will drive a bad switchback road up to the top of the mountain, and then hike a worse switchback trail back down to the creek. It won't be a river.

I know you're thinking, "Hey man, Georgia isn't on the moon!" That's a sign you've never been to Georgia. Ask the brook trout and they'll tell you. They rode a glacier here at least 10 thousand years ago and have been stranded ever since, a northern fish in the Deep South, surrounded by a steamy hot subtropical jungle full of bears, snakes and hillbillies, cut off from their brethren in neighboring creeks, with no hope of getting home. Like that Martian guy, they've settled in and made the most of it.

I crash landed in Georgia a few years back, a Michigan man of southern roots, like a young bird migrating to a place he has never been. It is in the nature of man to yearn for home in the place of his removal, and so it was that I sought out the brook trout in their southern redoubts on the dark side of the moon, in a place called Georgia.

If you have ever fished for brook trout, you know you can't just go after them—there are gods to appease. Up north I knew the lucky charms, the incantations, the alignments of planets and stars, and where to leave gifts for the wood elves and nymphs.

On my first outing, I performed no propitiations, an agnostic in search of empirical truth. I caught nothing but brown trout. A kindly wood fairy told me, "Go further up the mountain, dumbass," and I tossed her a Jolly Rancher as an offering to no avail.

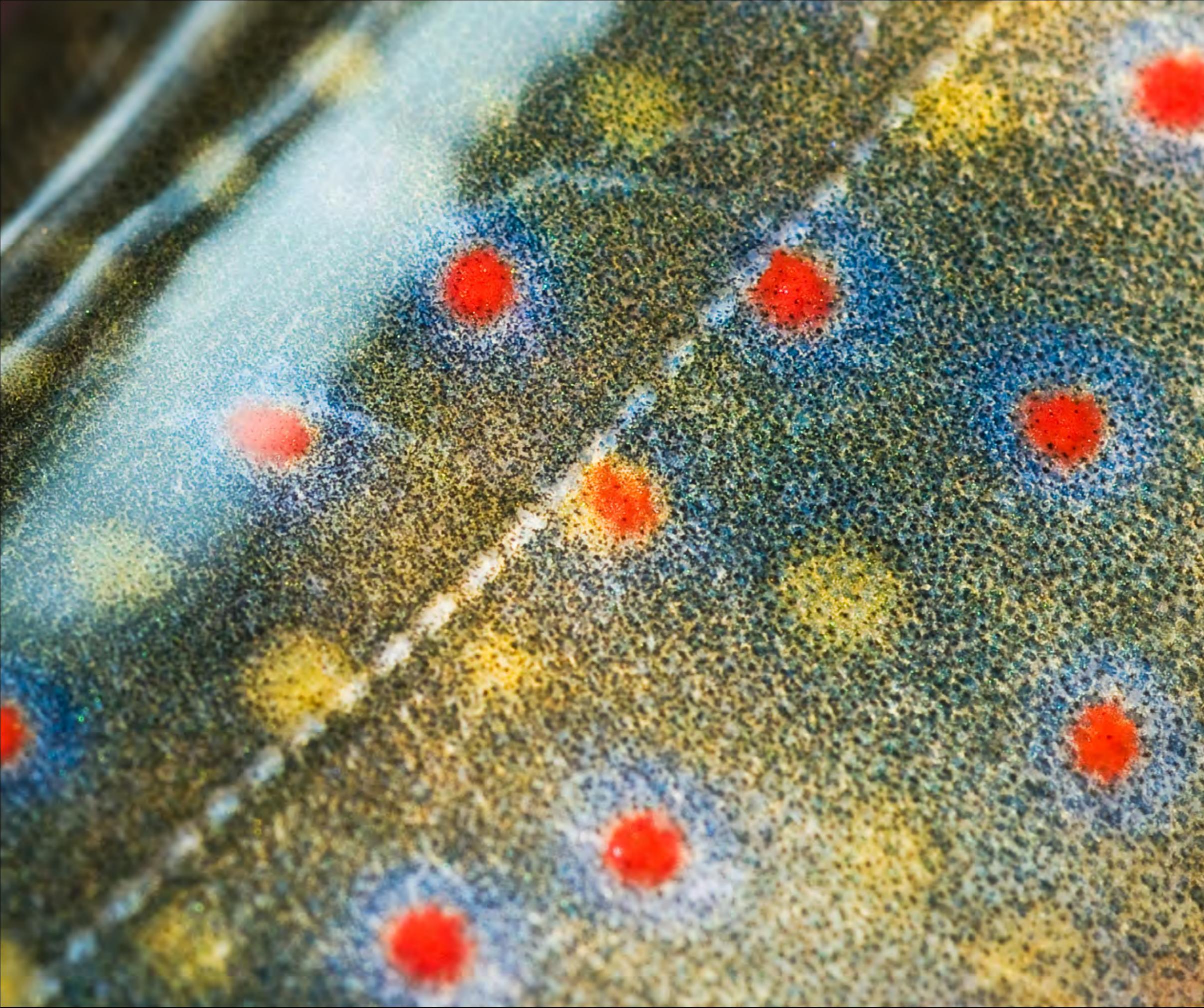
Before heading out again, I consulted my friend Alex, a brook trout shaman of the North.

"Do you have the Paradise? You need to offer blackberry brandy. Chant some lines from Traver. It doesn't hurt to read aloud from the book of Geirach."

"Which chapter and verse?"

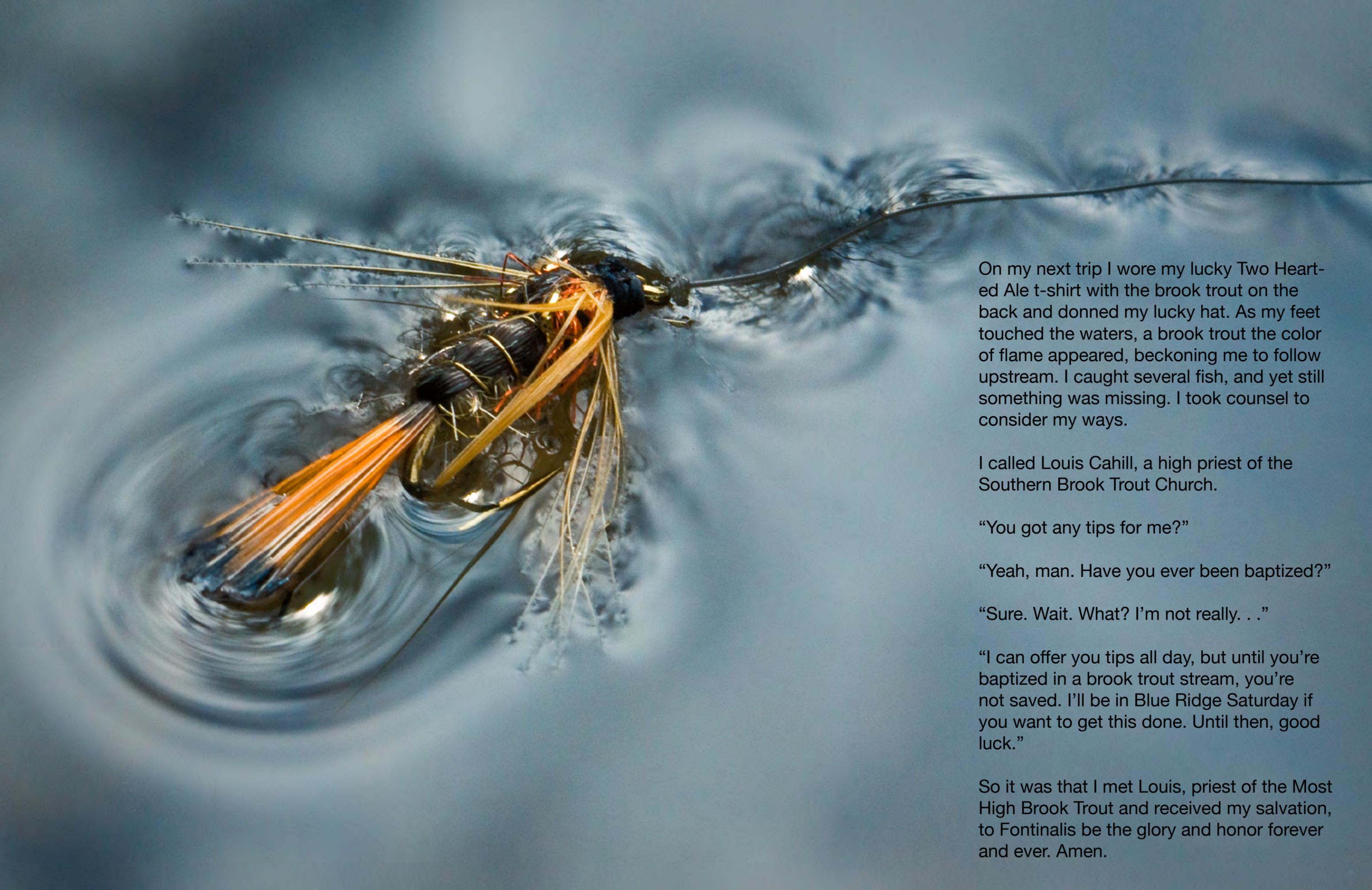
"Pick one."





Heeding Alex's advice, the next Sunday I drove around and read the religious signs in people's yards in lieu of church on my way to the creek. I caught one beautiful male brookie at the culvert—not the success I was hoping for. There it was at last: the Southern Appalachian brook trout. This was a good omen, but here in the devout South I wasn't so sure. What if there are other Southern gods to appease? Are there mountain gods? College football wood elves? The Baby Jesus fairy? The Real Housewives of Atlanta nymphs? Joel Osteen?





On my next trip I wore my lucky Two Hearted Ale t-shirt with the brook trout on the back and donned my lucky hat. As my feet touched the waters, a brook trout the color of flame appeared, beckoning me to follow upstream. I caught several fish, and yet still something was missing. I took counsel to consider my ways.

I called Louis Cahill, a high priest of the Southern Brook Trout Church.

“You got any tips for me?”

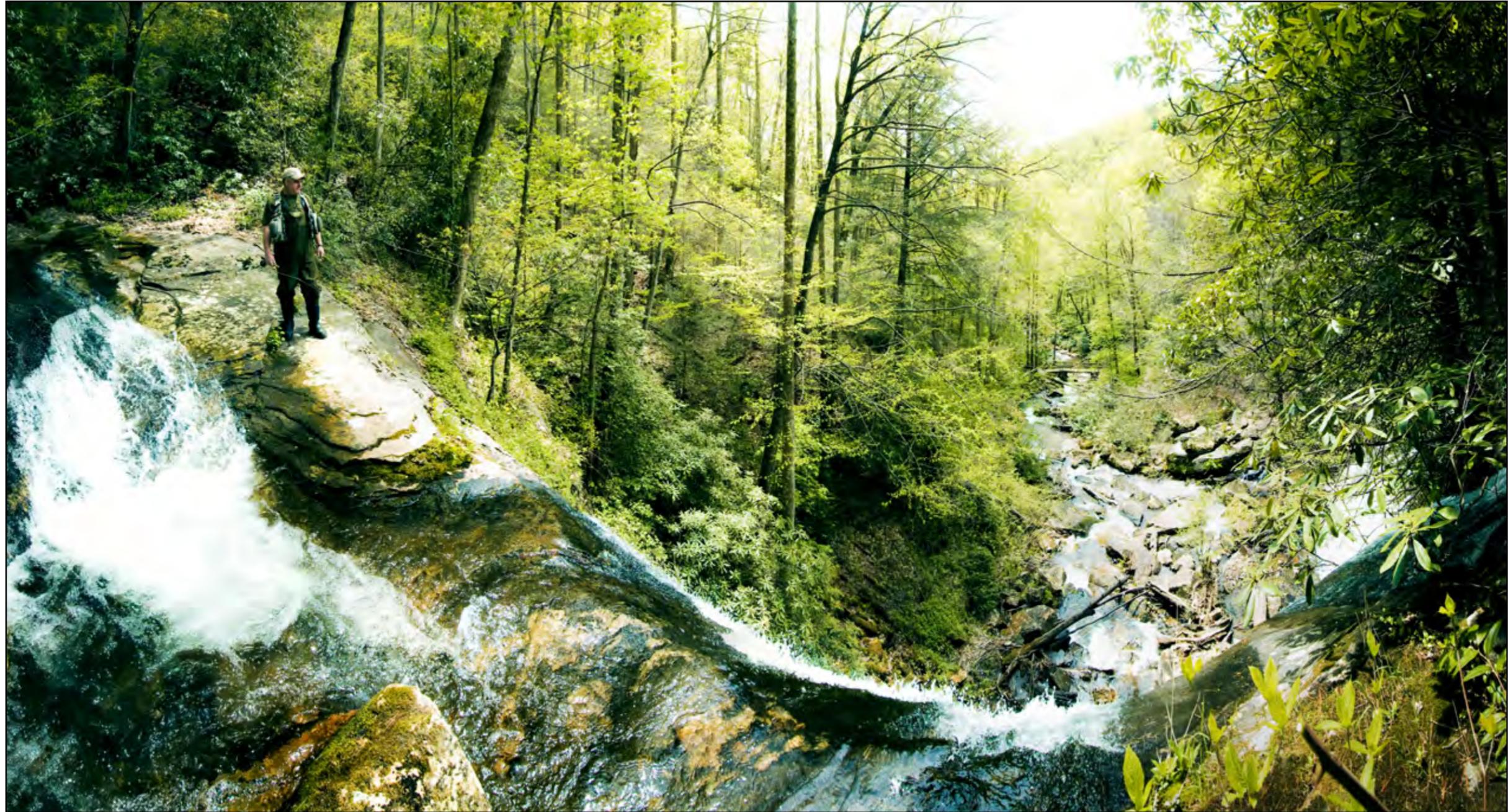
“Yeah, man. Have you ever been baptized?”

“Sure. Wait. What? I’m not really. . .”

“I can offer you tips all day, but until you’re baptized in a brook trout stream, you’re not saved. I’ll be in Blue Ridge Saturday if you want to get this done. Until then, good luck.”

So it was that I met Louis, priest of the Most High Brook Trout and received my salvation, to Fontinalis be the glory and honor forever and ever. Amen.

For my next trip, I wore the lucky hat and tee. I drove around and read church signs with the radio playing gospel. I brought the appropriate libations. I went to Golden Pantry and bought communion biscuits (gas station biscuits being the wafer of choice around here). I left offerings for the elves and nymphs and burned Parodi incense at the top of the mountain. I paid my tithe at the Dollar General. I uttered dark words it is not lawful for a man to speak to the rulers of the shadowed valleys, and muttered oaths at the shrub gods who guard every hole and lie. I chanted Traver and read Holy Scripture aloud from the Book of Geirach. I made blood sacrifices to the mosquitos and bullwhip vines. Then, and only then, did I descend to the creek to fish.







I fished and I flailed without success. In a frenzy, I cursed the valley and stream. I implored the heavens at the top of my lungs and profaned the holy mountain. Then it was that I slipped on the curved bedrock beneath, and falling backward was immersed. For long moments the current held me in its thrall. Fearing it was I being taken in sacrifice, enclosed in darkness until I beheld the Abyss; then was I miraculously released from that icy purgatory and washed out into the hole below. Arising from the waters humbled but unharmed I realized the truth. Brook trout, like grace, cannot be bought or earned, only attained. The important thing is to keep going up the mountain.



Maybe that's why Neil Armstrong never went back to the moon. Everyone knows he played golf on the moon; very few know he fished for brook trout. He never spoke of it. Even Neil wasn't going to give up a spot like that.



Jason Tucker has transplanted himself from Michigan to Georgia. Besides his raging ketchup habit, he has adjusted nicely, once again proving the widely held sociological theory that country is country is country.



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MOVING PICTURES

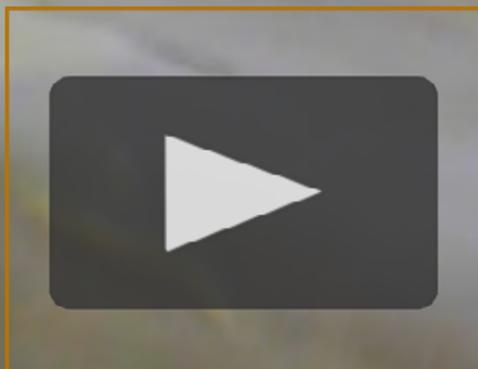


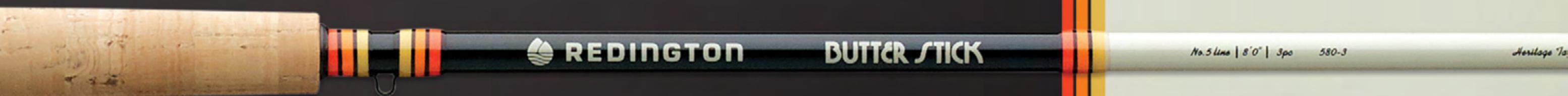
*DOUBLE FEATURE

Austin Green Weinstein and Pat Cohen



EVOLUTION OF A FLY





THE ALL-NEW
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CRITTER GITTER

Rand Harcz and Derek Keaton



Do you know what's in your rivers? Like, really know? Yeah, neither did we. To find out, we turned to the two most scientific people who aren't scientists that we know. Armed with a homemade collection of equipment and snorkel, Derek and Rand jumped into their new roles of SCOF Science and Stuff correspondents and went to the river. The river we'll be examining in this issue is a freestone smallmouth river in E. Tennessee. Rand and Derek scienced their way from the top to the bottom, and have brought back their discoveries as well as a case of swimmer's ear. So join us on a journey, as we go where no scientist has gone before: into the world of the critter gitters.

Fig. 1.
Grampus a.k.a. Helgramite







Fig. 2a.
Minners

Fig. 2b.
Crawdiddy

Fig. 2c.
Damsel

Fig. 2d.
Baby Smallie

Fig. 2e.
Helgramite

Fig. 2f.
Dirt







Fig. 3.
Ice Tray with Bugs



Fig. 4.
Flaring Grampus



Fig. 5a.
Sucka

Fig. 5b.
Chubbies



Fig. 6a.
Squirmy Wormy



Fig. 6b.
Blood Sucker



Fig. 7.
Ribbit. (Toad. Not Frog.)

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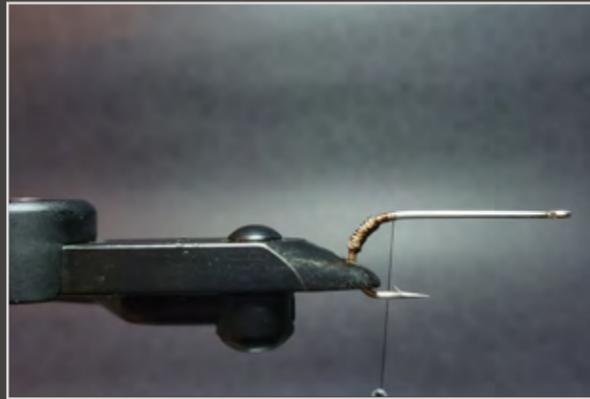
Every now and then, you're bound to run across a fish that you just know is there, but is being a real snooty pain in the ass; a fish that's basically laughing at what you are offering. As a guy who generally prefers articulated flies, it changes things up for me to throw a single and try to entice a mistake out of my prey. When I want to throw that single and have it be something that can be tied to mimic the forage color and size from any environment, whether fresh or salt, I think Clownshoe. It's a stellar bug that can be retrieved with that unpredictable injured wobble of a drunken county fair clown. The fly has evolved as have the available materials to tie it, but it always circles back to the principles perfected in the Keel Fly and the Bulkhead Deceiver. The construction of the fly gives it that wobble while maintaining the profile meant to match the forage at each stage of the retrieve. It is a fly with a lot of movement that's basically weightless, so it's easy to throw. And by simply changing up the lines used to throw it, you can cover the water column from top to bottom with confidence.



Material List:

Hook:	Gamakatsu SP11-3L3H size 2/0
Thread:	Danville 140D
Weight:	.025" lead wire
Epoxy:	Solarez Thin
Tail:	Strung Saddle or Schlappen
Flash1:	Micro Lateral Scale
Body1:	UV Polar Chenille
Body2:	Werewolf Hair
Flash2:	Chroma Flash
Body3:	Grizzly Saddle
Head:	Senyo Laser Dub
Eye:	3/8" Oval Pupil 3D Eye

1



2



3



4



Step 1: Place the Gamakatsu SP11-3L3H size 2/0 hook in the vise with the shank set level. At the back of the shank of the hook, make 8 to 10 turns of .025" lead wire down into the bend of the hook. Get your Danville 140D started and make crossing wraps over the lead to help hold it in place, then advance the thread to the rear of the shank. Place a small bead of Solarez Thin down the back of the bend and cure to fully lock the wraps in place.

Step 2: Prep two Strung Saddle feathers so they match up tip to tip and curve toward each other. Hold them directly over the hook shank so the tips extend back about two shank lengths past the bend of the hook. Bind them in with the feather stems together and directly down the top of the hook shank, from the back of the shank forward toward the mid-shank. At about the midpoint of the shank, clip the butt sections of the feathers then bind down over those ends with a few extra wraps of thread.

Step 3: Tie in 3-4 pieces of Micro Lateral Scale at the rear of the shank. It should be tied in and folded over itself so it cannot slip out. The Lateral Scale should extend off the back of the bend down each side of the tail and extending to just past the tip of the Saddle feathers. If necessary, clip any remaining excess, then tie in the UV Polar Chenille and carefully palmer forward to about mid-shank.

Step 4: For the body, I use Werewolf Hair. Take a pinch of the darker color, grab the center of the portion, and gently pull to naturally taper the bunch. Hold the bunch over the top of the hook shank with the tips of the hair extending about halfway from the bend of the hook back to the tip of the tail to help build in taper. Tie in with a few tight wraps, then fold the material back over itself and secure with a few more wraps. You will repeat the step with the lighter color of Werewolf Hair on the bottom of the hook shank. You will need to scissor taper both the top and bottom colors after reversing the hair, which is done by holding the reversed material up off the shank and stagger cutting with your scissors parallel to the shank of the hook.

5



6



7



8



9



Step 5: Give the fly a slightly darker back by adding a contrasting color across the top. Tie in 5-6 strands of Chroma Flash at the same tie-in point as the hair, then reverse it back over itself and secure with a few more wraps of thread. Trim the flash to length about halfway between the end of the hair and the tip of the tail. Also, add the variegation to the sides at this point by tying in a Grizzly Saddle feather down each side, with the tips extending to about where the hair was tapered out. Finish the step by locking everything in with another small drop of Solarez Thin cured over the thread wraps.

Step 6: Time to add the gill coloration. Pull a pinch of Senyo Laser Dub (SLD) and prep it by pulling it apart and stacking it a few times so the fibers are mostly aligned and equal length. Push this bunch of SLD over the eye of the hook and secure it with a few wraps in the middle of the material over the previous thread wraps before reversing the SLD back over itself and locking down with a few more wraps in front.

Step 7: Repeat the process of Step 6 with the primary head color. You will do this twice; once just in front of the gill color, and once right at the eye of the hook. Once tied in and whip finished at the eye you can gently massage the Laser Dub to stick up both above and below the hook shank.

Step 8: Using Loctite Gel, attach a 3/8" Oval Pupil 3D Eye to each side of the shank. The eye should be placed a full-eye width back from the hook eye. Place an eye quickly on each side, being careful that they match up both vertically and distance back from the eye, then gently hold the eyes in place for about 10 seconds to allow the eyes to lock in place.

Step 9: Finish the fly by making a single straight cut from the eye of the hook to both just above and below the edge of the 3D Eye. The result of these cuts will be an even wedge, giving the fly a permanent and realistic profile.



Mike Schmidt is the nicest viking we've ever met. When not asking permission to pillage a small village, he can be found tying flies in Florida, sans winter. That's ok by him. Order some flies from Mike at anglerschoiceflies.com.



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CLIMATE CHANGE

An Open Letter

By Rick Crawford

Images: SCOF



Dear Climate Change Deniers,

I need your help. But before I get into that, let's establish some common ground, because I am willing to bet we are a lot more alike than we are different. I am 35 years old, grew up in a conservative household in Savannah, GA, and love to fly fish. I am a Miller Lite-drinking, college football-loving, boiled peanut-eating capitalist. And I used to think climate change was some liberal bullshit, too, until I came to the realization that I trust science over our government any day of the week, because just like the fish we pursue, science has no prejudice. I also don't associate myself with any political party because, like most of you, I endured the Great Recession and to this day, I trust our government and politicians about as far as I can throw them; but also because there are some things I am conservative about, others I am liberal about, but mostly because I am an adult who can think for himself. All of that being said, what I am trying to understand is why you don't believe in climate change, especially since we know that climate change is already negatively impacting fisheries around the world? In fact, 97 percent of climate scientists who regularly publish in peer-reviewed journals agree that burning fossil fuels is causing an unnatural warming of our planet.

But, clearly scientific evidence isn't your thing, so I am not even going to go there. But here are some other common arguments from climate change deniers, who also happen to be my friends, that I hear:

“It fucking snowed in Charleston this year, and you are telling me that the Earth is warming?!” Valid point, but there is a difference between weather and climate. Weather is day-to-day, and climate is long-term. Yes, it snowed in Charleston this past January, but the overall trend is that the planet is warming. Warmer temperatures are causing more severe drought, which leads to an increase in wildfires, just like the deadly wildfire that killed 11 people and forced 14,000 people to evacuate in Gatlinburg, TN, in 2016, but fuck it, right?



“Climate change is a natural occurrence.” On the surface, this seems pretty legit. I mean, I can’t argue that the Earth hasn’t been warming since the Ice Age, but all of the data that measures greenhouse gas emissions show a drastic increase in levels of CO2 beginning with the Industrial Revolution that coincide with an above-normal increase in global temperatures. Warmer ocean

temperatures are causing more frequent and intense hurricanes. As I write this article, I have evacuated from Charleston to Columbia, SC, due to Hurricane Florence, which is projected to cause record flooding as trillions of gallons of rain will be dumped as it hovers over the Carolinas, and that kind of rainfall is unprecedented. Are hurricanes a natural phenomenon? Absolutely! What’s not normal is the size, frequency, storm surge, and rainfall that’s becoming more and more common.



“It’s not gonna hurt my feelings if we have warmer winters.”

Even though I lived in Jackson, WY, for a few years, I can’t say that I am a huge fan of bitter winters, so my feelings won’t be hurt either, but there are severe consequences to a warming planet, such as less snowpack that feed our favorite trout rivers and streams, resulting in more stream closures, and making it more difficult for cold water species to survive.

“Global warming is a hoax and there is no real consensus.”

Again, there is a plethora of data that scientifically proves that climate change is real, but I know how you feel about conclusive scientific evidence and consensus. I mean, there hasn’t been an increase in stream closures, invasive species, sea level rise, drought, wildfires, hurricanes or increase in global land and water temperatures that could possibly prove that global warming is real. Besides, in the history of the world, give me one good example of a politician choosing to pass policy that favors the corporations that donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to their political campaigns and I’ll stop writing right now.



Speaking of conclusive scientific evidence that is in no way political, let’s take a look at couple of examples where people have blindly followed a governing body over science:

“The Earth is flat.” I shit you not, there are still people still arguing that the Earth is flat.

“There is no such thing as evolution.” Are you fucking kidding me? Evolution is super-duper real, unless of course you also believe that dinosaurs never existed, in which case, you very clearly are not going to believe in climate change.



Look, you can even Google and find thousands of articles that support that the Earth is flat, that dinosaurs never existed, and that climate change is a hoax. The difference is that climate scientists use the scientific method where they test a hypothesis, make a finding, and then those findings are peer-reviewed by other scientists in their field, and in the case of climate change, 97 percent have concluded that burning fossil fuels causes climate change.

BAD

"I mean, there hasn't been an increase in stream closures, invasive species, sea level rise, drought, wildfires, hurricanes or increase in global land and water temperatures that could possibly prove that global warming is real."

"Even if you believe that the Earth is flat, evolution doesn't exist, and dinosaurs never roamed our planet, surely you believe in saving money, right?"



Perhaps the most mind-boggling of all is how climate change-deniers firmly believe that renewable energy somehow doesn't work and there is no ROI. Even if you believe that the Earth is flat, evolution doesn't exist, and dinosaurs never roamed our planet, surely you believe in saving money, right? Take your house for example: If you were to switch your light bulbs to LEDs, you would demand less energy from the power company, conserve energy, and therefore, save money on your power bill. It just so happens that this would also lessen the amount of greenhouse gasses your home burns, because the large majority of our power comes from fossil fuel-burning power plants. A real conservative would be chomping at the bit to go off-grid with renewable energy because the very ideology of being a conservative is to support capitalism while advocating for self-reliance. It is simply against conservative ideology to want to spend more money and not conserve finite natural resources. But I wonder who planted the seeds and continues to farm the idea that climate change is a hoax and renewable energy is for tree huggers? It couldn't be the very politicians who are owned by the fossil fuel industry, could it?



Anyhoo, back to needing your help. If you have made it this far, please help me understand why you believe climate change is fake, why you don't care if our fisheries disappear, and why you are opposed to saving money.

I really believe that if we removed the politics out of climate science, then we would stand a hell of a lot better chance of actually protecting what we all love. And I truly hope you can see that climate change is not a political issue in the same way that the Law of Gravity, the Theory of Relativity and the Third Law of Motion are not. It's science, and one thing you can be damn sure of: climate change is coming for your favorite trout stream and salt water flat. The question is, will you protect it?

Protect what you love,
Rick Crawford

P.S. Before some of you throw a shit fit when you realize that I own a sustainability and marketing business, also understand that science has proven climate change to be real...and I am a fucking capitalist!



Rick Crawford is the founder and president of Emerger Strategies. He helps all of us be environmentally better than we actually are. For that we thank him. Not so much for judging us.



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FAR AWAY FROM HOME



Homeless in Montana

Photos: Louis Gaudet

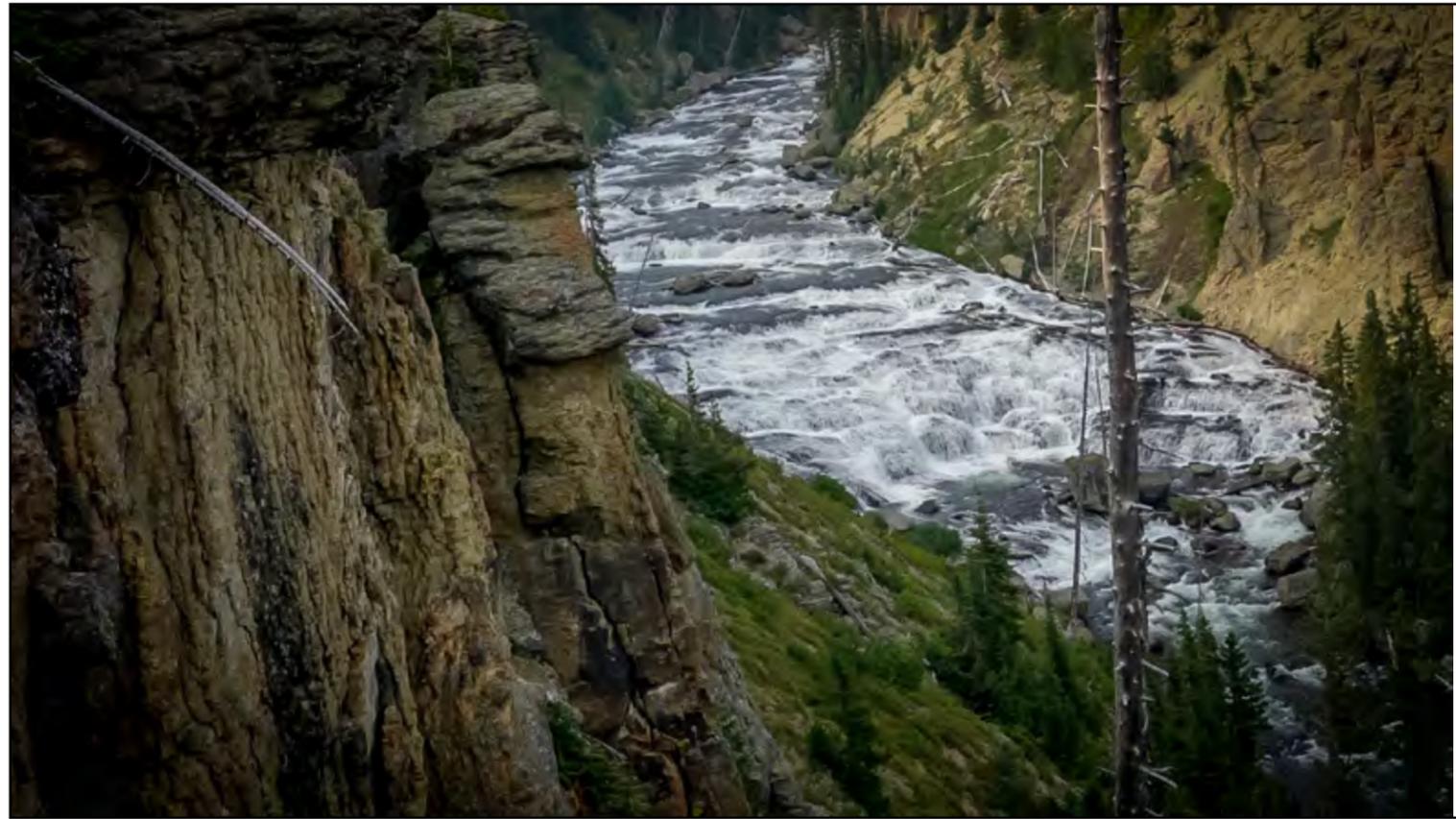










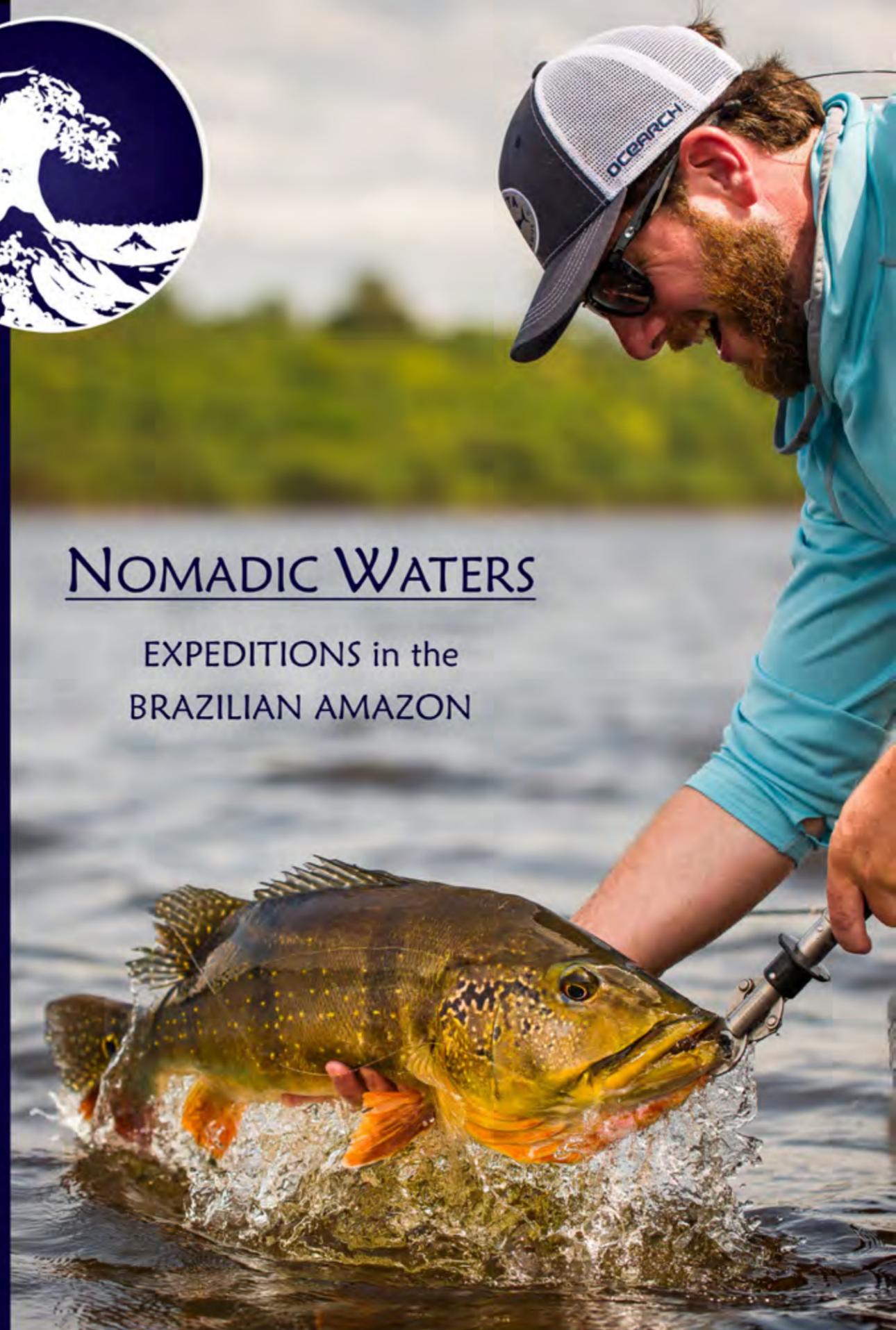








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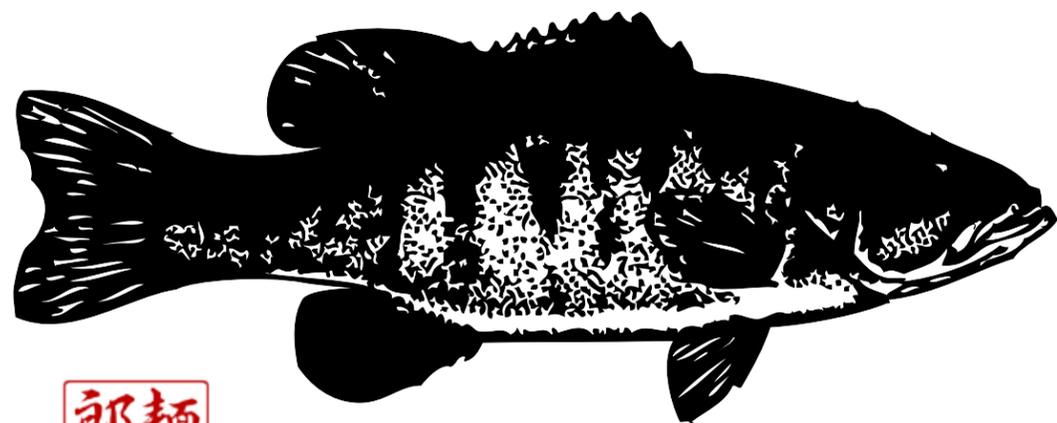
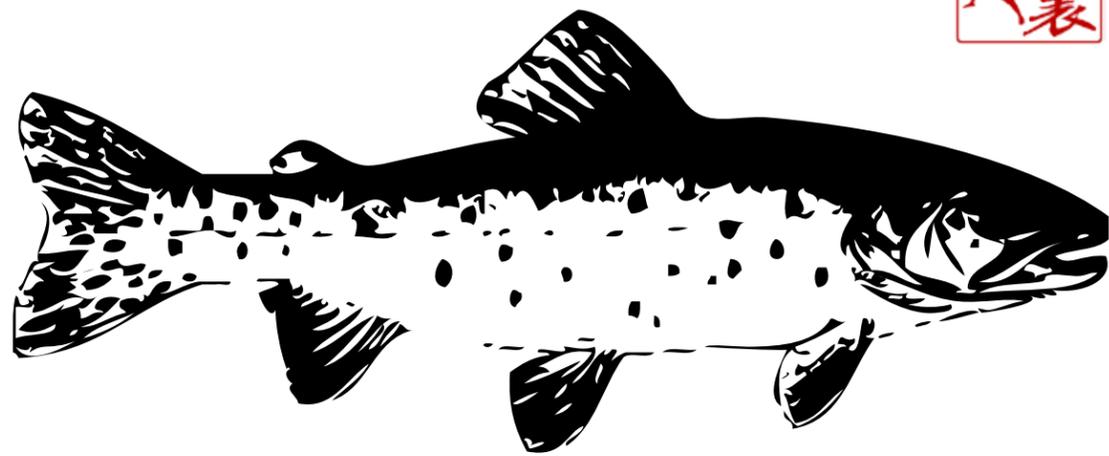


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GALEN KIPAR
ASHEVILLE FLY FISHING CO.
ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

“ **TAILWATER TROUT**

Shallow water nymphing leader recipe: 9' 5X mono leader. Cut off 16" of leader and add 16" of fluorocarbon 5X, then add another 16" of fluorocarbon 5X or 6X depending on the clarity of your water and the spookiness of your trout. The knot that connects these two pieces of tippet is a great place for split shot if you are using small flies with little weight. If you are using a heavier front fly to get your rig down the additional splice with split shot may not be necessary. Long leaders land softer, sink faster and give you a greater margin so you don't line fish. If you want your flies to sink faster and avoid split shot, cut off more of the original leader and add longer sections of tippet for a faster sink rate. Don't forget the bobber. Thingamabobbers are great if it's windy or you "need" to hero-cast, otherwise yarn is more sensitive and lands softer.

Deep water nymphing leader recipe: 9'-13' 5X mono leader. "Pogo" rig or "Ubangi" rig where the weight is at the bottom or end of the leader and tags with flies are above the weight. This rig plummets. The weight at the bottom slows the rig down and the current pushes your flies downstream ahead of the leader giving you a sort of fly first presentation. It is debatable that sensitive strikes are more noticeable because there isn't a weight between your flies and bobber. If the split shot snags the bottom you lose the split shot but usually not the flies. This rig also tangles less than an inline nymph rig where the split shot is above and between flies, as long as you are not double haul casting. Cut off 16" of leader and add 16"-24" of fluorocarbon 5X, then add another 16" of fluorocarbon 5X or 6X (again depending on the clarity of your water and the spookiness of your trout.) The tag on this piece of tippet is left long (4-5") where you will attach fly. Then add another 16" of fluorocarbon tippet creating a second tag. Then add a 6"-12" piece of 6X (should be 1 size smaller than tag size) and attach split shot at end with a loop knot so it doesn't fling off. Again, don't forget the bobber. Call it a strike indicator if you will, but it's really a bobber, isn't it?

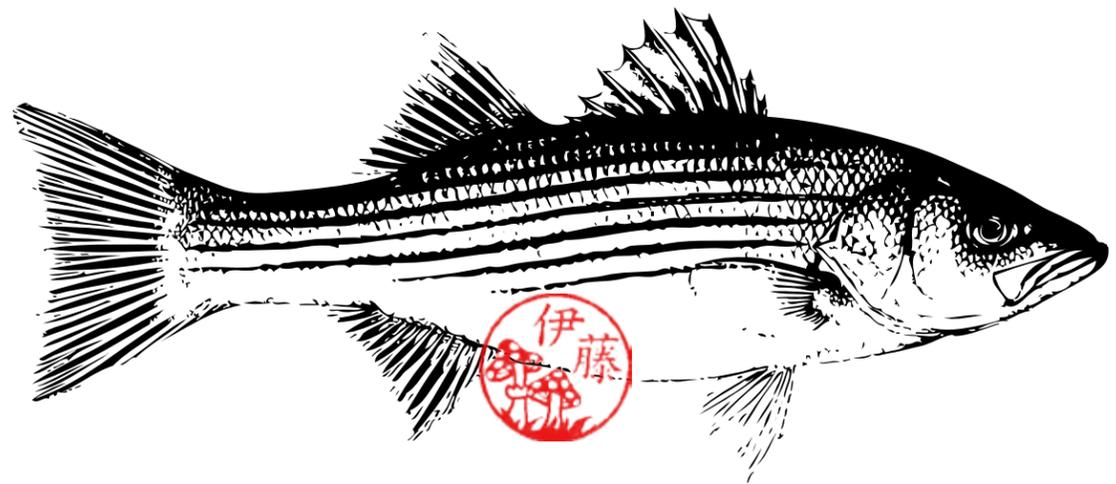
SMALLMOUTH BASS

Top-water leader recipe: 7'-9' furled mono leader with swivel. Then add 2'-4' of 8lb-12lb mono from swivel to fly.

Sub surface leader recipe: (Floating Fly Line) 7'-9' furled fluorocarbon leader with swivel. Then add 2'-4' of 8lb-12lb fluorocarbon from swivel to fly. Adding a 1/16oz bullet weight will help make a buoyant fly plummet when fishing pocket water or deep cut grass lines.

Sub surface leader recipe: (Sinking Fly Line 250 grain or higher) 3' of 10lb-12lb fluorocarbon.

Sub surface leader recipe: (Intermediate Sinking Fly Line 250 grain or lower) 6'-9' of 10lb-12lb fluorocarbon. ”



ANDY BOWEN
COHUTTA FISHING CO.
CARTERSVILLE, GEORGIA

RIVER STRIPER

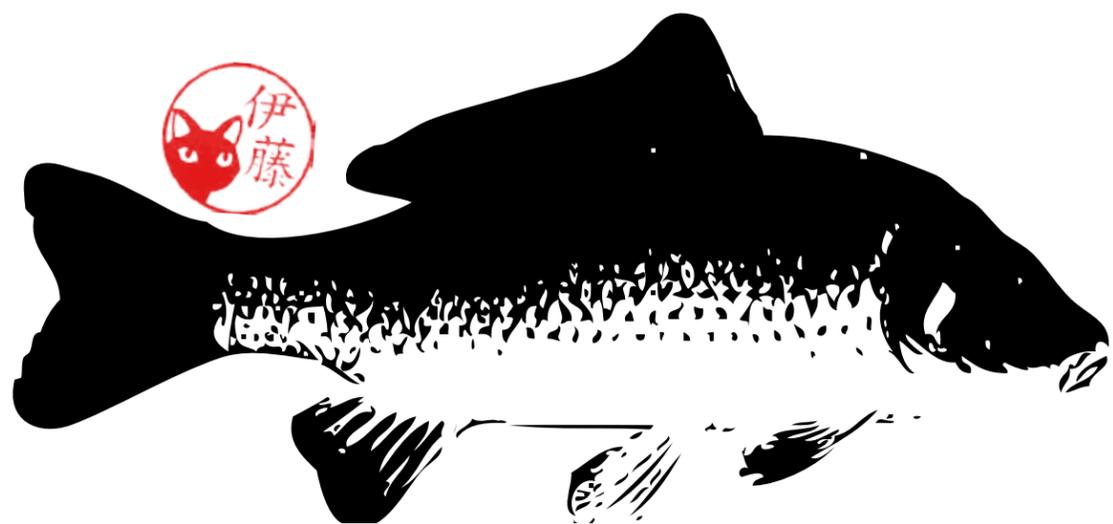
“ It depends, on intermediate normally a 4-5 ft straight 20-25 floating 4 ft 40, 3 ft 30, and 3 ft 20 or 25! I like this set up when fishing heavier weighted flies in order to manipulate fly better with stack mends etc. ”



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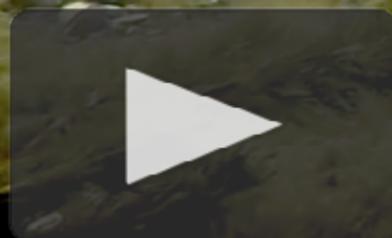


*DOUBLE FEATURE

Brett Winchel and Matt Crockett



DRY FLY SEASON



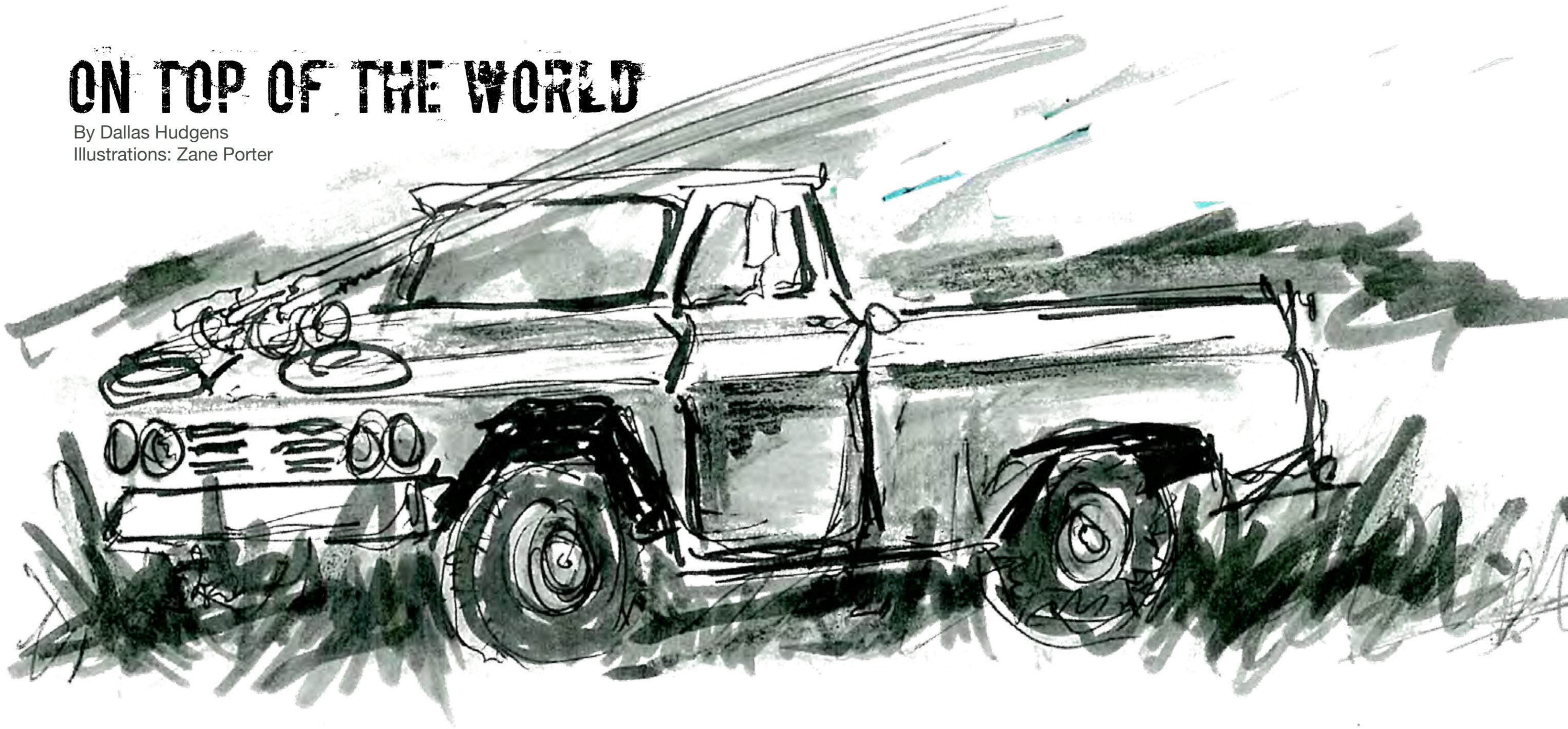


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ON TOP OF THE WORLD

By Dallas Hudgens

Illustrations: Zane Porter





The Black & Decker begins to percolate from the kitchen. I lay a few minutes longer as the scent of Maxwell House creeps into the bedroom. Knowing the temperature outside, I'm tempted to stay in bed and forget about fishing for the day. My judgment gets the better of me, and I roll out to feel the cool hardwood floor beneath my feet.

I grab my gear and make my way to the front door. Standing on the porch, I feel the bite of the air on my face and hands. A few four-letter words escape my lips, and I push toward the warmth of the truck.

The sun has just eclipsed the top of the mountain and begins to illuminate the shimmering ice that covers the bare trees and rhododendron. I'm brought back to reality by the smell of a sausage biscuit wrapped in a paper towel on the passenger seat. I make quick work of it and wash it down with a travel mug of coffee.

Doc Watson's "Sitting on Top of the World" comes on the radio as I drive over the river at the edge of town. Turning into the vacant parking lot, I find a spot and enjoy the heat a few minutes more. The end of the song nears, and I finish singing the last verse before stepping out into frigid morning air.

“And now she’s gone, and I don’t worry, Lord, I’m sittin’ on top of the world.”

I make my way to the bed of the truck and begin assembling my fly rod. Increasingly numb fingers produce faulty knots, and I must retie a few times before I’m able to get one to stick.

The swishing back and forth of my waders echoes through the parking lot and down to the river. I step over the foot of ice that juts out from the bank, and sink up to my shins in the water. The spring-fed river feels warm on my legs compared to the single-digit temperature in the air. The drag on my reel zips as I strip off line. Downstream, the mallards are butts up in the water, foraging for vegetation. I watch the ducks enjoy the water for a little while longer before I remember why I’m here. I

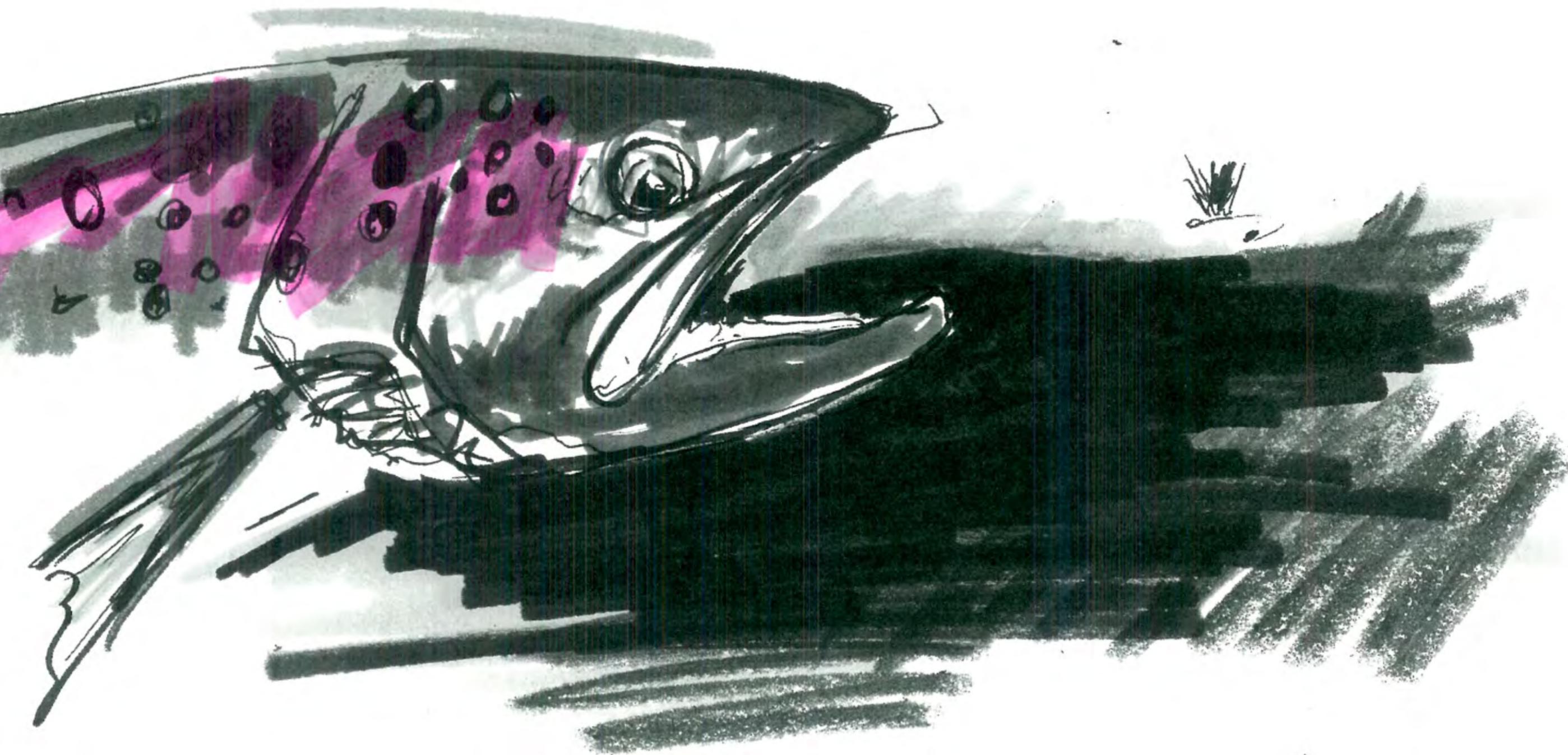
transfer my thoughts back to the task at hand and cast. My eyes focus in as the fly begins its drift.

Several new flies and a hundred casts later, the morning passes and no spots have produced fish. My fingers no longer pound from the cold but have gone numb. In a last-ditch effort, I decide to head back to the section of the river where I began.

In front of me, two smoke stacks cut through the grey December sky, the bright white smoke billowing up against the dark blue mountain ridge behind it. Behind me lies Main Street. Normally the hum of car engines can be heard from the water, but it’s quiet today. Most people are inside sitting by the woodstoves. I don’t blame them, and am starting to regret not having done the same.



My fingers no longer pound from the cold but have gone numb...



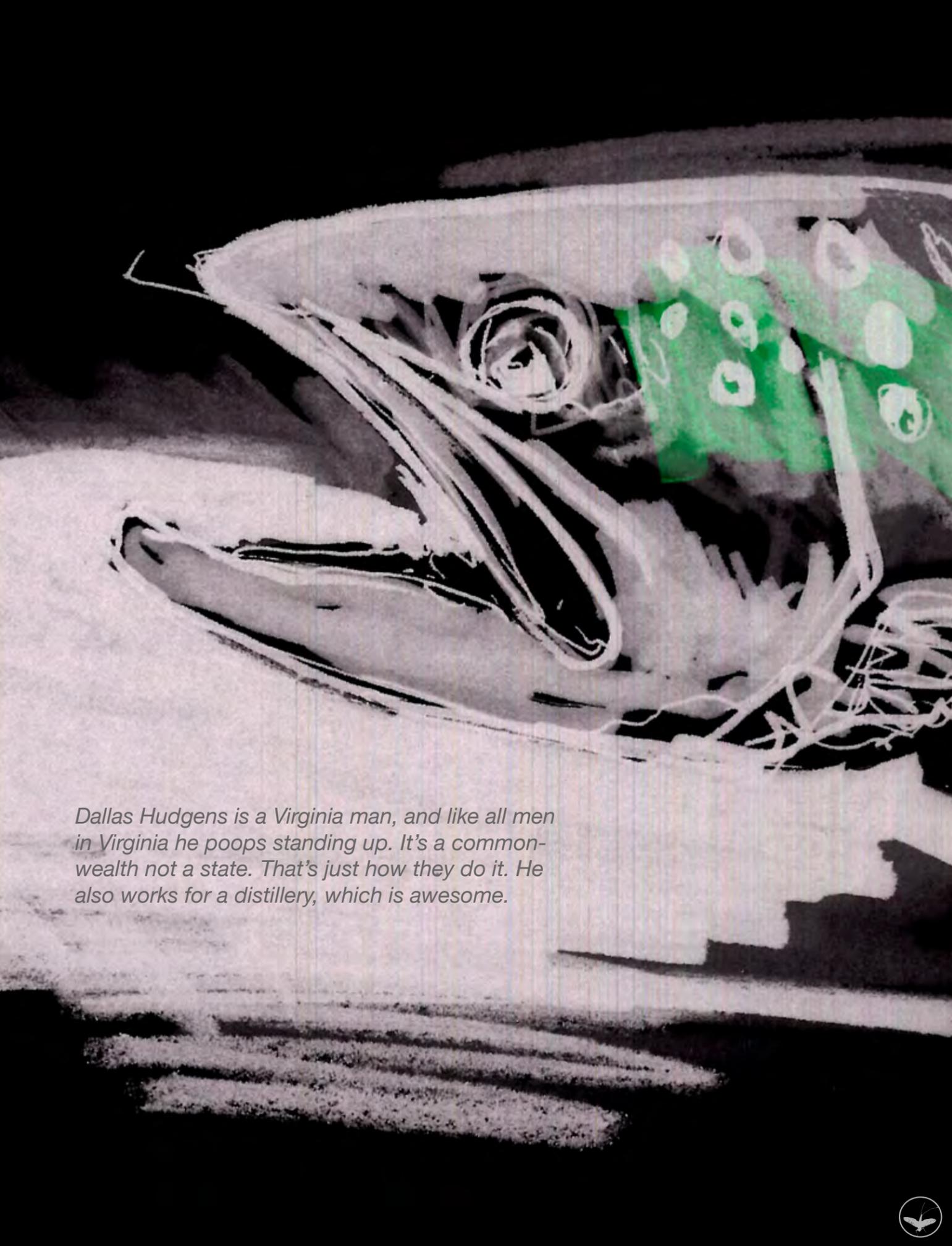
A few drifts later and this spot begins to feel like all the others. Cast after cast produces nothing and the frustration begins to grow. Freezing limbs and appendages starts to wear thin on my patience.

Standing thigh-deep in a river, freezing and fishless, I look at the time and realize if I leave now I can catch the tail-end of the NFL pregame show. As I weigh the pros and cons of fishing vs. listening to Terry Bradshaw, my fly is slurped below the surface. There's a swift hookset, and then the familiar tug of a fish on the end of my rod.

At this moment everything vanishes. There are no more ducks in the river, no more ice on the branches, and the cold on my arms and legs disappear. The thumping in my chest and the tug of the fish are the only things I can feel.

Another zip of the drag and I bring my free hand up, ready to reel it in. The fish pauses, and I make up some ground. It's six feet from me before it dives back to the current in the middle of the river. I let it tire before reeling back in. This time it doesn't have an opportunity to run. The trout warms my cold hand as I work the fly out. I admire the black spots that line the top of its back, and shimmering bright pink stripe that runs down its sides. At this moment I no longer feel the cold, but know that feeling will be short-lived. With a bat of a tail, I watch it swim off slowly into the shadows. I make my way out of the river past the parking lot to Main Street, where a burger, a glass of whiskey, and Terry Bradshaw wait for me.





Dallas Hudgens is a Virginia man, and like all men in Virginia he poops standing up. It's a commonwealth not a state. That's just how they do it. He also works for a distillery, which is awesome.



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The Back Page Journal
with Paul Puckett and Mike Benson

March 18th
Somewhere, Bahamas

Today we found fish. We found a lot of fish. Tucker and I each managed to land a few, but even with hundreds of fish around, you can only land one or two before they move off and you have to go and find them again. The new moon is making the tides a lot larger than usual, which means much more water moving in and out, and faster currents as a result. This has the fish in a hurry to get to wherever they happen to be heading at that particular time, giving us limited shots at them before they move on. But the numbers are impressive. At one point today, I was hooked up to a fish and I had a school of at least 200 fish just circling me. The fish I had on had taken the fly deep, so my hands were tied and I was unable to take advantage of being the center of a bonefish hurricane, but it was still really cool to get to be that close to that many fish. The day had started off with a high tide, which had the fish pushed way up into the mangroves, but wading along the mangrove edges, waiting on the fish to push out into the open gave me time to take in the scenery.



It's such a foreign experience for me to be wading for bonefish in the shadow of limestone cliffs and big rocky bluffs. The sun was just coming up and the

birds and other wildlife were waking, their calls echoing off the hills. It was beautiful, and for a moment you could almost forget why you were there. Soon though, I was torn out of my reverie by a rushing sound. A gust of wind had kicked up what seemed to only be affecting one section of trees on the top of the nearest cliff, but soon the mangroves around me were whipping in a frenzy and a water spout just appeared out of nowhere, 20 yards from me blasting water, mangrove leaves and limbs 20 or 30 feet into the air. It only lasted about 30 seconds, and just disappeared, leaving me and Tucker a little shaken up. Nature can be a crazy bitch. My body is sore all over, and I cringe to think about how many more miles

I still have to wade tomorrow. But the sun will rise, and I'll stretch my muscles and eat a handful of ibuprofen before loading up in the boat and getting dropped off back into the middle of nowhere. Amid bonefish, hurricanes, and mangrove tornadoes.



