The Bushkill Creek
by Samantha Volk

Stagnation,
a trunk disappearing
into dark water
branches stiff
and blossoming petals
afraid to be stung by cool air.

Motion,
  currents ripping at roots
  and erupting over stones
  guiding life and debris alike
  white born from a brown blur
  while
  the
  trunk
  stands
tall.
At first, the serenity is dazzling.
Just 50 feet north of Route 22,
just 50 yards below the stress,
the homework, the never-ending
GroupMe notifications
that await back in
reality.

The Bushkill is momentary.
A creek that divides an already
divisible city. Life and time
seem suspended.
The car horns and LCAT shuttle rattle
feel distant despite their
proximity.

But then a car flies past
on the one-way road running parallel
to the water, snapping runners and
walkers out of their
serene daze as they pull headphones
from their ears and mentally question the
speed limit.

“Danger Dam” reads a sign
on the left. Wawa wrappers, empty
gatorade bottles, caution tape and
Milwaukee Best Ice reveal humanity in the
natural scenery. Cigarettes long smoked,
and fishing poles long used lay
broken.

The trance fragments, leaving pieces
of relaxation nestled within the
bait cans and styrofoam coffee cups.
Another car comes flying by and this
time you’re tempted to wave them down
because the walk back up is always more
daunting than the walk away.
The Banks
By Bethany Rack

Its path is reckless and fearless,  
carved into the landscape  
over many centuries of flow.  
From the banks,  
erosion exposes spaghetti roots,  
like matted hairs that have been  
tangled and twisted  
after a restless nights slumber.  
The smell of decaying earth  
permeates through the air,  
bringing new life to the valley.  
Leaves float down the river,  
like a thousand life rafts  
for god’s smallest creatures.  
A pool of shark fins make for rough water,  
foaming at the mouth like a rabid hound.  
Sediments race down the riverbed,  
eventually to kiss the sea.