

Strawberry Canal

Dennis Smith

Strawberry Canal, flowing down and out
onto the heartland;
thousands of pounds of water
passing every second,
somber as it passes.

It was here along the concrete banks
where giddy swimmers felt the world go by,
and on a Friday afternoon in June,
Keith's uncle, when he was a boy,
remembered being current-dragged,
along with his dog, and the yells,
and farmer legs running along the bank,
and a strong, brown arm grabbing him
just before the siphon,
and the sound of his dog going under,
rubbing against the planks
and appearing, later, on the other side,
not quite floating, but visible.

It was as if the sky and water
were playing for keeps
and hadn't told you,
but just kept flowing
like you hadn't been there.