Why I Go Fishing

By Lorrie Wolfe

for David Gibas, 1949– 1973,
hang-glider pilot and nature filmmaker

"…Everything / was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!"
Elizabeth Bishop

Not because I want to trouble the trout
but because I love the shy susurrations
of a lake lapping at its shoreline.

Because water's song unravels the day,

Because I relish unwinding time, thinking
of words I love to roll out of my mouth,
over tongue, teeth, lips.

Because M*asigian,* your own word, Davey,
created for the sinuous wonder of running your hands
over velvet and silk. No one can look it up.

Because it's not in the dictionary.
It lives in memory between *magic* and *massage*
Unlike you, Davey, whose words ended

too soon.

Because you were rainbow, hummingbird, kestrel,
a sky-pilot, buffeted by gusts.
That afternoon, you chose to fly, to be a bird.

Because that damned rotor wind,
roiling off the mountain,
caught your sail, brought you in

too low,

leaving the mangled ruin of your body
entangled on the rocks,
a thousand feet below.

Because the chill of the moment calls me back.
I slip out of timelessness, and you become spectral.
Earthbound anew, I concentrate on the pole's tip,

Because *Masigian*
Because above the whisper of water,
your word floats like a blessing.

And yet, when a fish finds the fly,
and bites,
I reel it in, like catching the perfect word.

Because I land the fish.

I stroke its tender belly,
touch the rainbow splashed
on its speckled sides,

Because I'm thinking *Masigian*, and *mastery*,
which would come so near to *matter*
in the dictionary.

Because it matters, the choices we make.

Because I unwind the hook,
step to the edge, thinking *Davey*
and release the fish back to the lake.