

## BRIAN WALKER

### WEST TEXAS WATERS

The lake spreads rippled, big yet bare:  
an overwhelming act of faith  
to court wave-hidden fishes where  
the dam backs up the Brazos' flow,  
has long since drowned the scattered trees—  
four counties call it reservoir.  
We sit on limestone's knobby knees  
and watch a bobber rise and fall,  
nod almost in time with the waves;  
West Texas sunshine floods the rocks  
and rattlesnakes curve out of caves  
high up the crumbling bluff.  
The fish are part of local lore  
until you catch one for yourself  
and wonder if the lake has more  
and if your fragile bait will last—  
a tug, and red and white are gone,  
then back, then toward the other bank  
as minors of the watery race move on  
and nip your dangling earthy charm.  
A trolling boat comes putting by—  
a stringerful of bottle bass  
will be their limit, to your eye;  
their arms stretch out in fantasy.  
Then wind, that oldest resident,  
cuffs swirling cat's paws on the waves,  
the signal that our time is spent;  
we must come back on other days.

