The Creek

It is a mirror, the creek. It’s lights and shadows dance in the minds eye as if they were fairies on wings. She is swollen with the rains of the winter. Her once almost dry bed now drinks in the lifeblood of the planet, and carries it downstream toward the great water. On her banks the trees are barren of leaves now only lichen remains. They are awaiting the arrival of spring to begin again their dressmaking. When green will be the color of the season, and bracken will join them in clumps along the banks of the creek.

The hiding places of small animals are everywhere unseen by passersby. The mice and voles each have their burrows in the underbrush along her banks. Sleeping away the cold winter nights in safety and warmth, their babies, also waiting for the coming of the warmth of springtime. Flowers and ferns with green fiddleheads will spring up upon her banks, providing delicious meals for the young animals that inhabit her banks. But for now the nuts and seeds gathered in the long summer days when her water was smaller will hold them through.

The creek she is cold now. The life in her waters moves slower to compensate for the coldness of her depths. The fish swim more slowly and have less need for food. The grasses at waters edge have been drowned out for the winter, but will return in the summer when the water is lower. They will be home to frogs and tadpoles, to fish eggs and tiny water beetles, and the children will come.
The children will come with their brightly colored swimsuits and board shorts, with their goggles and snorkels; they will come and explore her lights and shadows. They will try with all their might to catch the frogs and tadpoles. Practice they will, their skill at catching the tiny fish and water skippers in their small hands. Many tries will be made but precious few will be caught. And then the rains will begin to come back, and the children will go away again. And the cycle will begin all over again, as it does each year.

The creek, she is a mirror, a mirror of lights and shadows, of days gone by and days to come and of children. Of bracken and lichen and of earth she smells, and each year just like the hundreds before she awaits the coming of spring, when her banks can more easily contain the runoff from the foothills, and the children will begin to come again.