

CHARLES RAFFERTY

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Source

The touch-me-nots tangle  
the creek air like a living cloud,  
muffling the water already  
muted by the hillside  
August heat. Sometimes there  
is movement, the darting  
of small birds. More often  
it is anvil-still, humming  
with crickets and hidden  
frogs. Once, a fox leaped out of it  
into broad air and took off  
with something in its mouth.  
I am afraid to reach beyond  
the blossoming crumbs  
of aster and phlox. The creek  
is in there though.  
I hear the gurgle of it  
after rain. I see it emerge  
far downhill like a boiling  
clarity. But here at the top  
it gathers like a riddle. Only  
the winter can enumerate  
the creek-start mysteries—  
only the air that kills can show me  
the nests and rivulets,  
the secret I wanted so badly to hear  
that I sweated up a hill  
and into its green confusion.



## ABOUT CHARLES RAFFERTY

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Charles Rafferty's poems have appeared in *The New Yorker* and *The Southern Review*, and his stories have appeared in *Sonora Review* and *Cortland Review*. His most recent chapbook of poems is *Appetites* (Clemson University Press). Currently, he directs the MFA program at Albertus Magnus College.

