

Appalachia

Volume 71
Number 1 *Winter/Spring 2020: Farewell, Mary
Oliver: Tributes and Stories*

Article 34

2020

Confluence

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Recommended Citation

Swist, Wally (2020) "Confluence," *Appalachia*: Vol. 71: No. 1, Article 34.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/appalachia/vol71/iss1/34>

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Confluence

August morning, sunlight
flickering through
green canopy of birch,

tulip tree, white pine.
Step by rhythmical
step, even at

the steep incline
after the falls
where the brook spills

her first pools.
Suddenly, the triangular
head, the stout body,

weaving through
speckled leaf litter,
undulating at my pace.

I raise one leg,
she passes underneath —
then the other,

we two
in harmony,
divine cadence. I turn

my head in astonishment.
She slithers toward
the trout lilies brightening

the edge of the brook,
looks at me,
as she wriggles beneath

my scissor kick.
She slips into
the sunlight warming

stones above the water's
rush, flicks her
tongue, pauses to drink.

From the fire tower
at the summit of the mountain,
I can see the whole valley.

Wally Swist

WALLY SWIST's books include *The Daodejing: A New Interpretation*, with David Breeden and Steven Schroeder (Lamar University Literary Press, 2015), and *Candling the Eggs* (Shanti Arts, LLC, 2017). Swist's new books are *The Map of Eternity* (Shanti Arts, LLC, 2018), *Singing for Nothing: Selected Nonfiction as Literary Memoir* (The Operating System, 2018), and *On Beauty: Essays, Reviews, Fiction, and Plays* (Adelaide Books, 2018). He won the 2018 Ex Ophidia Press Poetry Prize for *A Bird Who Seems to Know Me: Poems Regarding Birds & Nature* (Ex Ophidia Press, 2019).