

the complexity of the characters is not revealed in the plot's present action but through mentions and memories of other characters to one another. In this way, the cast feels true to life as their outward personas remain consistent.

The novel's last act is reminiscent of the beginning of Russell Hill's *The Search for Sheepheaven Trout* as the narrator returns his friend Yuri's ashes to the river they fished together. *The Annual Big Arsenic Fishing Contest!* is really a novel about male friendship, not fishing. In spite of the loud-mouthed trio's sometimes unlikable (though generally humorous), overly verbose cursing and masculine posturing, in the end the novel is a heartwarming tale about the deep connection and comically bizarre nature of male bonding.

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Kevin Holdsworth, *Good Water*. Boulder: UP of Colorado, 2016. 186 pp. Paper, \$21.95; e-book, \$17.95.

Good Water begins with the author building a shack near Good Water, Utah—a shack that will become a house, then a shed, and—finally—maybe firewood. That was his and our introduction to the town that tacks down the rest of the book's essays. Holdsworth introduces his readers to many people who live in and around Good Water: the hippies and the rednecks (and the redneck hippies); the Mormons and other religious folk; the proprietors of the town's few businesses; the meth heads and alcoholics; and his neighbors—the many he loved and the few he hated. The book is too tight to be a collection of stand-alone essays and too loose to be a single-arched memoir; it's somewhere in between.

Holdsworth is best when he and his family are his subjects. The first essay introduces his then fiancée but reveals that the relationship didn't last. Holdsworth effectively avoids discussing the specifics of that relationship until about halfway through the book with the essay "Wild Currents," which shows him at his most vulnerable, and, perhaps, his finest. We see this vulnerability one last time in the final essay, "To Remember What Is Lost," a eulogy to

Utah's former poet laureate (and the author's step-father-in-law), Ken Brewer.

What makes this book particularly timely is its discussion of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The book's prologue has Holdsworth and a skiing buddy toasting Bill Clinton on a mountain in south central Utah for creating the national monument in 1996. Later Holdsworth writes a letter to Clinton inviting him out to see the land the president preserved with a stroke of his pen. It's hard to read this and not think about the current struggle over Bears Ears National Monument (which neighbors Grand Staircase-Escalante). The complaints about Grand Staircase-Escalante are the same as those we now hear about Bear's Ears:

When you waved your executive wand and changed history, there were a lot of people in these dusty little towns that said it would kill them and their way of life. But you know what, the opposite is true. Panguitch, Tropic, Cannonville, Henrieville, Escalante, Boulder [Utah]—these places were, in fact, just about dead. Take a look at them today, ten-plus years after the fact, and they are thriving—thriving, I tell you. (138)

Holdsworth's discussion of land issues in the desert West represents the complicated nature of being local and concerned about the future of a place. Holdsworth praises Clinton for establishing the national monument but also maligns him, saying the designation was "pandering to the bicoastal elites" (xv). He mourns the passing of an inefficient garbage dump but protests the building of a dam. Perhaps what he does best is give a voice to locals that's usually underanalyzed in western writing. *Good Water* inspects the complicated space between being an environmentalist and being from a place that you don't want ever to change.

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