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STREAM EXCREMENT BY KATHRYN KURTZ

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Cough suppressants and disinfectants,
sift through treatment plants
to petulant fish that sip
the watery mixtures.
Medications are defecations
not defined
as pollutants
by water quality studies.
Caffeine, Prozac, Ibuprofen,
and urine
are found in streams in thirty states,
side-effects of drug-approval tribunals.
Environmental assessments could show
odd sexual organs in wild animals and
in some plants.
What if
purple loose strife and kudzu vines
were proliferating
on estrogen and progesterone?
The suggestion that biological effects are
real
prompted the President of
Corporate Health at a big drug company
to say,
"It's hard to think
what we'd be able to do about that."
Then he took a drink of water that
flowed through a regulatory crack.

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Kathryn Kurtz teaches non-fiction in the Journalism Department at Ramapo College. Her book, *Switchbacks: Ascending the Catskill Mountain High Peaks*, is under review and a collection of essays on quantum mechanics and the paranormal is forthcoming. She has a Ph.D. in Creative Writing, Union University, and an MFA in Journalism, Goucher College.