RICHARD BRAUTIGAN
(1935-1984)
- Born in Tacoma, Washington

- 1956 Moved to San Francisco and became a small part of Beat movement, publishing books of poems such as *Lay the Marble Tea* and *Please Plant This Book*

- 1961 Wrote *Trout Fishing in America* during a long fishing trip to Idaho, but could not get it published.

- 1964 *Confederate General from Big Sur* sold 743 copies.

1972 moved to Pine Creek, Montana. Also spent time in Japan.

1984 Brautigan’s body found several weeks after he committed suicide by shooting himself.
Other works include:

**Novels**

The Abortion: An Historical Romance (1966)
In Watermelon Sugar (1968)
Willard and His Bowling Trophies (1975)

**Poetry**

All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace
Please Plant This Book
Rommel Drives on Deep into Egypt (1970)
The Pill Versus the Springhill Mining Disaster (1968)

**Stories**

Revenge of the Lawn (1971)
Trout Fishing in America (1967)

Themes:
• The search for good in contemporary America
• The imagination’s power to transform reality

Because the book is antididactic, based on the Zen Buddhist belief that life is essentially determined and that social progress is an illusion, the book promotes social change through personal transformation rather than collective action.

Technique:
• Self-conscious artificiality
• Documentary collage: collection of literary parodies, historical allusions, and the signatures of popular culture glued together with the protean phrase “Trout Fishing in America.”
“The Kool-Aid Wino”

“He created his own Kool-Aid reality and was able to illuminate himself by it.”

“Trout Fishing on the Bevel”

“I had a vision of going over to the poor graveyard and gathering up grass and fruit jars and tin cans and markers and wilted flowers and bugs and weeds and clods and going home and putting a hook in the vise and tying a fly with all that stuff and then going outside and casting it up into the sky, watching it float over clouds and then into the evening star.”

“Time is but the stream I go a-fishin in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its think current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars.”

--Henry David Thoreau, Walden

“The Cleveland Wrecking Yard” (pp.102-107)

Nature as a commodity

repository for tarnished dreams that can only be revitalized with imagination.