No Truth But in Things

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I know men who work the fringes of crowds, aware of clumps of cover and exits, unshaven, in denim and flannel, baseball caps pulled low, incognito, hands in pockets, toothpicks ground between molars, speaking stories in pinched off diction, in jargon and pure land or water poetry, speaking in

Soilbank, treeline, birddog,
posting a blocker and runnin birds out the cover from the draw, ditch, slough—
knew they’d be comin out from feedin in the cornstocks, would bed down in that reed grass, switch grass, brome grass—
knew that with the weather droppin down from the northwest they’d sit tight in the mornin so as not to damp their feathers on that drizzle, fresh snow, hoarfrost, and we’d have to almost step on ’em to make ’em flush—

speaking in
Breakline, weedline, mudline,
finding fish on the inside turn of the point on the break between bottom structures, rockpile, sandbar, mud flat —
he just hammered it first cast, that chartreuse twister tail, that red-and-white daredevil, that fire tiger deep diver, or he just touched it with his plastic lips—
I’d tipped that ledhead, tube jig, lindy rig, and he couldn’t resist that shiner, redtail, fathead so I set that hook—felt by the roll and shake that it was a walleye, small mouth, big pike—

No truth but in soilbank, birddog, weedline.