

The Catch

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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

I was away all winter, having just retired and wanting to see what it was like to be gone so long. I'm settling back in as I write this, reviewing the winter damage in my yard and at the beaches of Belfast harbor, and picking out signs of spring like the drydocked floats being powerwashed and the daffodils fighting their way up through last season's debris.

I went to a May full-moon bonfire party down on Lincolnville Beach this week, and as I made my way along the sandy path through dried beach grasses, I caught the smell of woodsmoke and the sound of the sea. The sudden combination was visceral. "I'm home," I said aloud, and then "It's summer," but not in a way that meant it was warm and blooming (which it certainly was not). What I meant was it was that *opening time* of the year when we all drop our shoulders a bit and breathe in more easily. I traveled in my mind like the ghostshipping *Capt'n Lee* of Margot Kelley's piece in this volume, past the near islands and "past Monhegan and Manana, a dozen miles from the mainland, out to the open sea."

The selections in this issue reflect the visceral experiences, in all their diversity, of life along the shore and on the water. The writers call up the specificity and physicality of these experiences like Pat Ranzoni's "Touchstone," the poetic ring of sardine brands in Mark Raymond's "Sardines," and the dance of elements of which we are a part in Valerie Lawson's "Nature's Grace."

In "The Old Fisherman," Derek Schrader calls up the connection to our human elements of patience and hope. And who hasn't felt that we were sometimes only "navigating by sound and the scent of spruce on the shore," as Richard Miles' narrator is in "Bearings," or had experienced a "terrible unmooring" like the *Capt'n Lee*? As Dennis Damon says of his 15-year-old self sitting in a seine skiff many years earlier: ". . . I watched it all. I heard it all. I smelled it and I felt the flowing rhythms of it."

We hope that reading this issue of *The Catch* will be an opening time for you, and an opportunity to drop your shoulders a bit and breathe in a touch of Downeast Maine.