

The Catch

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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

“Imagine everything being in place,” begins Baron Wormser’s poem, “An Island Romance” in this year’s edition of *The Catch*. He doesn’t mean that everything is neat and tidy—instead, it’s “the rightness of place that counts.” So it is with this collection of fiction, poetry, history, and essay that celebrate the rightness of place along the Maine coast, which inspires and nurtures but which is by no means neat and tidy.

In this edition we find a range of diversity among marine species (“every kind of fishing you could imagine,” writes Mattie Rodrigue in “An Ocean Venture”) as well as human subspecies: seiners, lobstermen, sardine packers, researchers, drifters, draggers, fossil hunters, blueberry rakers, millworkers, storytellers. What counts is the interconnectedness of the natural world and the people who live here and with each other. And don’t forget the boats, which include a 75-foot research vessel, a rowboat, a scallop dragger, and sardine carriers.

The selections here are not a gathering of nostalgia, although the past of pay packets, second-shift sardine factories, and five and dime stores is honored. It’s a past that forms the basis for the present and the future. Bridges between time are built as in Rodrigue’s report on working a research boat where fishermen and researchers move past an older lifestyle based on large fish stocks to today’s more data-driven approach to fisheries management. The foreman in Mark Raymond’s “Barrens” “won’t talk Spanish” to his immigrant blueberry rakers, yet the narrator notes that “everyone’s come from somewhere else,” even the Micmac and the lichen on the rocks.

Although connections abound, they are not romanticized. There is too much bad weather, death, and necessity for that. As the narrator in Matthew Bernier’s poem “What a Drag” says about his decision to go scalloping in December, “there is no grace upon the waters . . . but \$10 a pound rents religion.” Perhaps there is a bit of magic, too. One of the characters in Peter Spectre’s “Fossil Brothers” tells his friend: “You don’t find fossils. Fossils find you.”

Ubiquitous in this idea of everything being in place are belief, acceptance, continuity, and hope. As the man and woman decide in Jefferson D. Navicky’s piece of magical realism: “Throw your young body against the waves and come up clean.”

We hope you will enjoy this issue of *The Catch* and the special place that inspired it.