

Fall 1980

The Fisherman's Permission

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Recommended Citation

Hibbard, Scott G. (1980) "The Fisherman's Permission," *CutBank*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 15 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss15/24>

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THE FISHERMAN'S PERMISSION

You think it's a logger, then see the Chevrolet.
Another shithead from town. No Tribune,
Crown Royal. He walks like water surrounds him,
leans on his heels as though he were there,
tackle on water, ripples of his own.
He says he belongs, has title
to trout. He brought his dog,
an aunt, kids busy with Fritos.

Tell him fish are not hitting. Say
Go back, fish in the river.
His mind is working. He thinks of lake on his legs,
the insistent grip, gentle pressure.
But listen, land is your pulse,
knows what you'll do before you do it, like cowmen
good with cattle. The lake is not its own.
See that fish are worth their trouble.

Make him a deal. Let him in, demand
half the trout. There's crew to feed,
the pig and piglets wait for the cook
and the end of his dream. Fish have ways
of looking you over, a ghost that ruins you
sure as any—rattles windows,
fish-gill breath on you neck.
Believe me, it isn't worth it.

Look, this fisherman isn't right.
Fish make a difference, like moon, cloud cover,
time of day. Watch the mechanic.
Welders have maker's way with metal and melt
steel to steel, like a lake fuses creeks,
even lakes that keep to themselves.
I'm here to tell you, fish the fisherman.
His boots were made to irrigate.