

Spring 2022

Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish; An American Patriot Goes to Brunch

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Recommended Citation

Borruso, Anthony (2022) "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish; An American Patriot Goes to Brunch," *CutBank*: Vol. 1: Iss. 96, Article 11.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss96/11>

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ANTHONY BORRUSO

FAST-FISH AND LOOSE-FISH

As if he could grab Texas by the panhandle, man thinks whatever he jabs is his. Lob a harpoon into a blubbery back, and it's fit to hitch beside the bulwark. Thrust a flag into a craterous plunder and the tide rises and falls at his command. Is not possession the hole of the law? Don't the commons make you weep? Wistful sailor, droll cowboy, frontiers of ambiguous blue and brown wait to be plated on maps. A bandit carries hate across the Sonoran desert, sips it judiciously from a leather flask. What belongs to anyone seems increasingly slippery, take the lines crammed into this sonnet, and the meanings that heave inside each word, take the dreadful bone-white whale I've managed to stick with a waif-pole after three days of hard chase; they are mine, for now. But soon, according to unwritten rule, I too, will slip into death's dirt and democratization, abandoning flesh to reclaim my ribcage and plagiarize the poetics of earthworms.

ANTHONY BORRUSO

AN AMERICAN PATRIOT GOES TO BRUNCH

The Donner Party was a formal affair: cufflinks, silk gloves, tophats chewing the fat of an earlobe. And then there was me, succulent in suspenders, beside a scatterplot of hors d'oeuvres, eeny miny moe-ing escargot, human nose, the love-tapped flagellate's back, but feeling forlorn, like I don't belong here: middle-class immigrant sampling the stratosphere. This is not a poem about healing the nation. There's no poultice, no stitch, no gangrenous limb to slough off with ease. Some things just happen and happen and I only know of one sure cure and it ain't backgammon. It's uncapping the skull, replacing whatever's inside with that gorilla's persistent cymbals: *God Bless This Country*. Its ninety-nine varieties of puffed wheat, its courageous flailing impotency. Each night, I go to sleep sick, sick of squeegeeing my insides with benzos. I wake up cured, like a suckling pig, like a salad dressed in manifest destiny, like a sabbatical in the liminal space between breakfast and lunch.