

Grass Shrimp

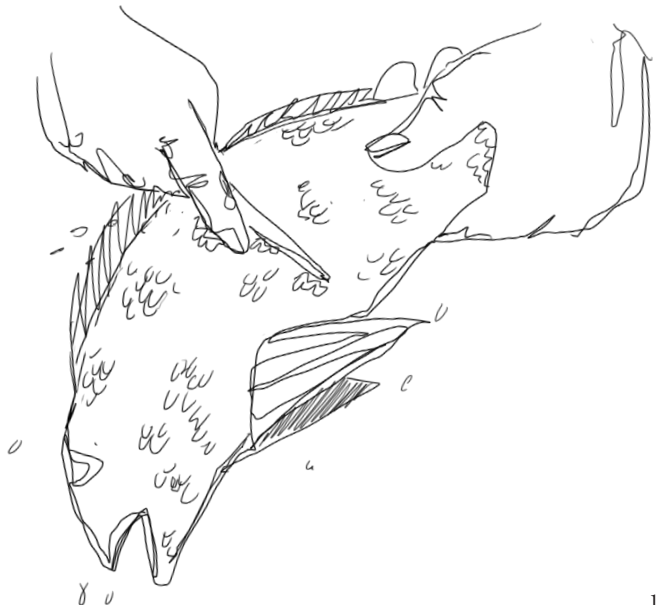
Having lunch,
in a restaurant,
located on the water
in a large public park
over-looking busy docks;
boat ramps, as very
expensive looking fishing
boats; trucks
with expensive looking
trailers attached,
backing up and down
the ramps,
as fishermen
come and go
off the lake.

In the distance, a fluttering
beyond the boat ramps;
appearing, almost as
an afterthought,
an old man,
standing on the sidewalk,
his back to the water,
rapidly scaling and gutting fish-
scaling one-side, then
flipping the fish over
to rapidly scale the other,
then gutting the fish-
all on top of a municipal
wall that separates
the park from the lake.
A wall upon which
also supported an
upright, worn bicycle

and countless fishing
poles.

I am distracted from observing
the old man, by braggadocious
laughter, coming from
a nearby table of lunching fishermen,
whom were carrying on
about their expensive boats,
fancy lures, football, golf, the
market.

The smell of raw fish
preceded the old man
appearing at the counter
in the restaurant, next to me,
where he asked for a bag of ice,
for which he could pay
in two days' time.



A wind-worn, old black face,
crowned with the whitest of hair,
the old fisherman wore a worn
ball cap, worn khaki work clothes,
and worn tennis shoes.

I commented on his good fortune,
asked what he used for bait.
Grass shrimp was his reply.

I further inquired, where
one could purchase *grass shrimp*?

The old fisherman looked at me oddly,
then smiled, *Don't know, was his reply.*
I netted them up this morning.

The old fisherman
left the restaurant, passing
the lunching braggarts, none of
whom seemed to notice him.

However, as best I could tell,
the smell of raw fish quit
the building with the old fisherman's
quiet departure.

by Gene Moore, Esq.