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Contractual  
Obligations  
*southern culture*  
**on the fly**



SCOF  
MAG  
STILL  
FREE

everything that matters

TIPK 1/22



Made for every angler under the sun — the Simms SOLAR Collection takes the sting out of hot-day fishing with built-in UPF 50 protection, mobility-boosting fabrics and full-coverage designs that let you cast forth in comfort.



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**THE ONLY BURNING YOU SHOULD FEEL  
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GUIDE / LODGE OWNER / FISH BUM: RUDY BABIKAN

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ORVIS FLY RODS

# INNOVATION AT EVERY LEVEL



Since 1856, our passion, curiosity, and obsessive attention to detail has driven us to test, iterate, refine, and build rods that redefine the sport.  
**NO MATTER WHAT THE PRICE.**

**VISIT [ORVIS.COM/FLYROD](http://ORVIS.COM/FLYROD)** to get the best rods in the industry at every price point.

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**CLEARWATER**

**ENCOUNTER**

Going solo. After two straight months rowing for redsides in central Oregon, guide and wild fish activist Jake Dodd finally gets out from behind the oars and into casting position. ARIAN STEVENS © 2022 Patagonia, Inc.



## Seize the Day Trip.

When we set out to rethink the fly fishing vest, we didn't want an update. We wanted a transformation. The Stealth Pack Vest incorporates Patagonia's latest ultralight, durable, recycled materials with the load-lifting suspension technology of our trail running gear. The result is a comfortable, fully adjustable, internally stabilized vest with extraordinary carrying capacity. Finally, the humble fishing vest has some bragging rights.

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SCOF spring Flutter





Photo: Indian River Lagoon, Florida - April 2022, Steve Seinberg



Photo: Sugarloaf Key, FL - April 2022, Dave Fason



Photo: - IRL, Florida, May 2019, Steve Seinberg





Photo: Sugarloaf Key, FL - April 2022, Dave Fason

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*WE DON'T JUST FISH FOR THE FISHING, WE FISH TO FEEL IT IN OUR SOUL.  
THAT'S WHY, FOR OUR EIGHTH REVOLUTION IN GRAPHITE,  
WE BROUGHT THE FOCUS BACK TO RHYTHM AND AWARENESS—  
SO YOU CAN TRULY FEEL THE ENERGY HAPPENING IN EVERY  
SINGLE MOMENT ON THE WATER.*

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*With R8 technology, we enhance that two-way connection from  
hand to fly and back for greater feel, flow and control.*

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S.C.O.F  
SPRING 2022  
ISSUE NO. 43  
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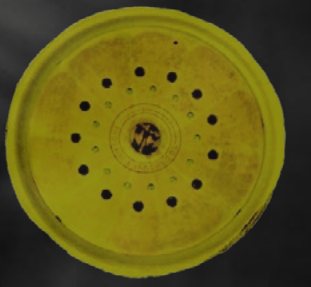
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# FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION

## AMPLITUDE INFINITY

"When I'm guiding I always have a couple rods lined with Amplitude Infinity - its versatility allows me to be ready to fish any situation we might encounter, from nymphing to dries and even bombing streamers. The AST Plus and the half-line-heavy front taper makes longer casting and turnover a breeze."

- Alice Owsley, SA Ambassador

FEATURING AST PLUS  
FOR SUPERIOR SLICKNESS AND

**2 1/2** TIMES MORE  
DURABILITY  
THAN CLOSEST  
COMPETITOR



- Extremely versatile general-purpose taper designed for most freshwater species
- Features AST Plus slickness additive for superior shooting and increased durability
- Floating Texture on the tip section for the ultimate in flotation
- Made a half-size heavy to load fast action rods, but works well with a variety of rod actions
- Extended head length for long-distance casts and superior mending ability

This spring, I offer you a case study in desire. I have a friend, let's call him Randi with an "i". Randi is an avid angler, or at least he was. Randi has guided, conquered the French Broad River's smallmouth bass with both plastic and fly, and has even gone so far as to deposit bait traps in his neighborhood creeks, converting those chubs into an infectious giggle that can be heard all the way up and down the river. Even just a couple short years ago, Randi had his life set up quite nicely to chase fish as much if not more than a responsible adult should. It was easy: no kids, a simple lifestyle, and a mate who didn't require the trifling legalities of matrimony. The Randi of yesteryear was footloose and fancy free, rocking a perma-grin. He once told me that he really didn't have any life ambitions or goals, he just wanted to be able to fish and hang all the time (a thought that finds me every day during my morning movement), but sadly that Randi with an "i" is gone now.

Like many of us, Randi became a father. Unlike many of us, Randi has now collected three daughters under the age of two. With no assisted reproductive technology called upon in this math, two of his daughters were surprise twins. His house is full of toddler joy while his drift boat remains neutered in the garage, staring at him through the kitchen window like a good old bird dog begging to be put back into service. My daily phone call to Randi in search of the minute-by-minute happenings from the water now only produces one answer to my query: "I'm holding babies."

I don't think he's had two free hands in a year and half, let alone a rod in either. Now those of us who have sprung children from our loins understand that the joys of fatherhood are both real and very, very different from the joys of constantly fishing with your friends. Not better or worse, just very different. Anecdotally, whenever I now tell Randi I'm going fishing, I'm immediately met with verbal arrows of hatred. I conversely never tell him I hate him when he tells me he's changing yet another in what must be a triple-headed monster of soft serve diapers. An assembly line of shit, people. Where the line never stops. Ever.



Now, why do I share this cautionary tale during this, the Spring Issue, the time of year when things are born? Safe sex, folks. Contraception is what I'm talking about. Cover up your junk, male or female, figuratively and literally. Listen, if you want to have kids and make a conscious decision to do so, more power to you (dumbass). But a surprise child or (I'm biting my own tongue here) surprise multiple children is a storm that even the most bearded fly fisherman, male or female, can outlast. I'm not saying that children are a prison sentence, but I am saying that children are the equivalent of house arrest. Alarms alert authorities anytime you are within two miles from having fun. As a final thought exercise, in an effort to hopefully convince you to protect yourself and society in general from any rabbits unexpectedly meeting their demise, please consider this: You will find joy in teaching your children to fish some day. Until that day, your children will prove to be subpar casters, and won't be able to row or pole for 14-15 years unless you get them on a comprehensive human growth hormone regiment in those crucial pre-school years. Just food for thought. So hopefully this helps someone, somewhere. Lord knows it could've helped Randi.

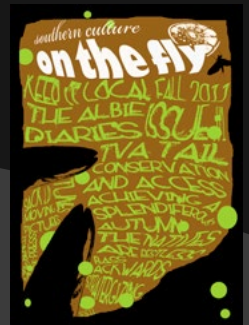
Wrap it up kids,

Dave  
Editor/Father of Two

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Everything that Matters



NO. 1  
FALL 2011



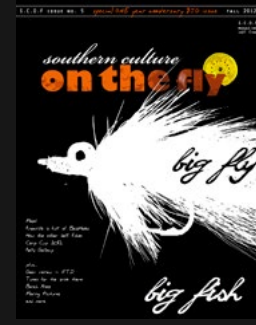
NO. 2  
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SPRING 2012



NO. 4  
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NO. 5  
FALL 2012



NO. 6  
WINTER 2013



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SPRING 2013



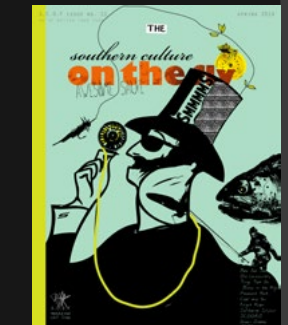
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WINTER 2014



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SPRING 2014



NO. 12  
SUMMER 2014



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FALL 2014



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SPRING 2015



NO. 16  
SUMMER 2015



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FALL 2015



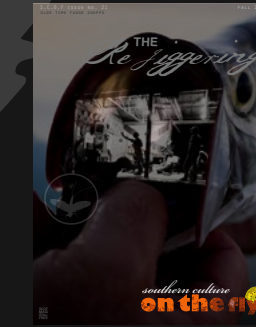
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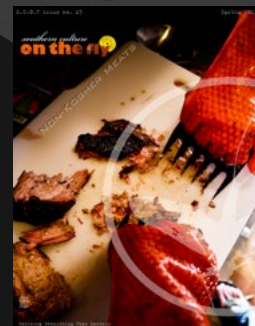
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FALL 2016



NO. 22  
WINTER 2017



NO. 23  
SPRING 2017



NO. 24  
SUMMER 2017



NO. 25  
FALL 2017



NO. 26  
WINTER 2018



NO. 27  
SPRING 2018



NO. 28  
SUMMER 2018



NO. 29  
FALL 2018



NO. 30  
WINTER 2019



NO. 31  
SPRING 2019



NO. 32  
SUMMER 2019



NO. 33  
FALL 2019



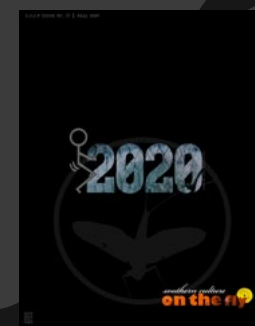
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SPRING 2020



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SUMMER 2020



NO. 37  
FALL 2020



NO. 38  
WINTER 2021



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SPRING 2021



NO. 40  
SUMMER 2021



NO. 41  
FALL 2021



NO. 42  
WINTER 2022

# Haiku

with Peter Perch

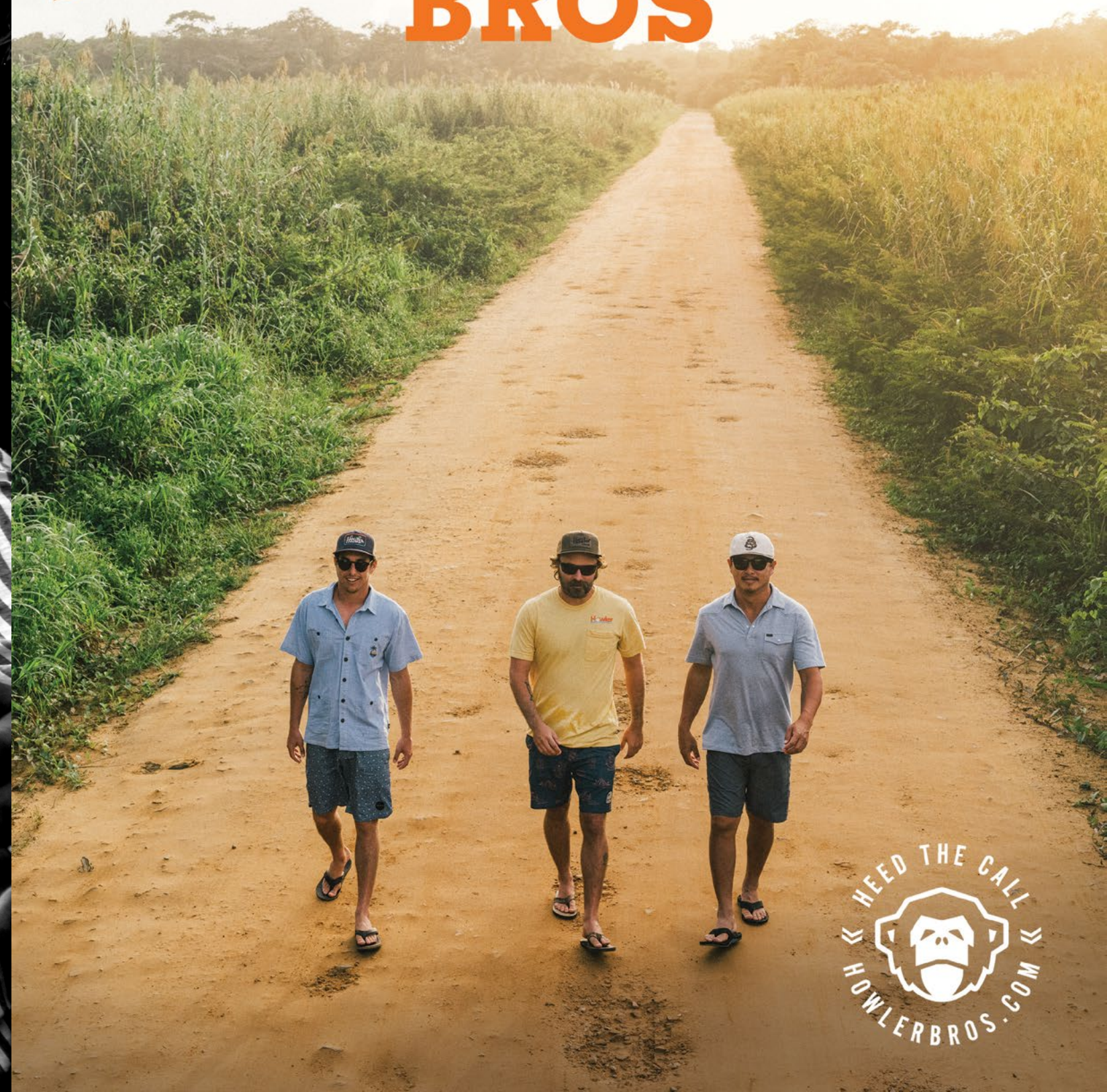


Rock in my boot hurts.  
Mayflies just started to hatch  
Can't get it out now.



# Howler Bros

## BROS





# NRX+<sup>S</sup>

# CRUSH VARIABLES.

Conditions in saltwater environments can slide sideways in seconds. Walloping wind and cloud cover pack the potential to hinder the performance of even the most experienced tropical angler. When favor's stacked in nature's corner, level the playing field with fishing tools forged to conquer these, and other common variables.

Rolled with our most advanced compound taper construction to date, NRX+ S provides the power, line speed, and loop stability expected from modern fast-action rods, without compromising "feel" and finesse for short shots when clouds turn the lights down. NRX+ empowers anglers with confidence-boosting control in less-than-ideal situations.



## G. Loomis

[gloomisflyfishing.com](http://gloomisflyfishing.com)

# GLUTTONY

By David Grossman  
Photos: Dave Fason

I now believe that fly fishermen mainly fall into two categories. There are those who are content to ply the same water month after month, year after year, getting to know a piece of water so intimately that there are no secrets left, and while the bite isn't always good day in day out, it's good enough to make the lean times worth the wait. I often imagine this angler as an older gentleman wearing a page out of a 1980s Cabela's catalog sitting by the river, reading his book, eating his bologna and cheese sandwich out of its wax paper wrapping, and waiting on the fish to do something, anything. They may do their dance or they may not, he'll be there either way.







The second category of fly fisherman is the one who has no home. They continuously roam the countryside like marauding Mongols, looking, searching, nay requiring the best bite they can find. These fishermen have no loyalty to any piece of water or any particular species. The only allegiance is to the most action possible in the shortest amount of time. You'll recognize them by their Mad Max rigs, tricked out to be on the road for extended periods of time, always hovering in that ethereal gray area between homelessness and domestication. When they land, if the fish don't cooperate, they move on to the next whisper of a bite on the wind. It may be carp eating cicadas on some no-name lake in central Kentucky, hybrids eating shad in East Tennessee, or tarpon eating worms under a bridge in the Keys; it matters not to these nomads of reel and rod. The only thing that matters is being there when the thing is going off.











I personally started off stationary fishing, but these days I've gone full commando, and I'm loving every minute of it. I can still understand the joy that working a piece of water until you really understand it can bring, but I've also experienced the pure unadulterated bliss that being in the exact right place at the exact right time can bring. At the end of the day, every cast bliss is just more fun than hard-earned satisfaction ever could be. I now troll social media, the Internet and dusty books to glean the slightest bit of information on where, when, and who can fill my insatiable need to connect to fish

continuously for as long as possible. I have a couple of different boats, and friends with others so that no hatch, migration, or blitzing activity lies beyond my grasp. My wife and children have adopted the mentality of a fireman's family, without any of the honor. They are now mentally tolerant of me leaving in the middle of the night for days at a time based on nothing more than a cryptic text: "It's on." If my wife, after almost 20 years, didn't understand my undying devotion to fin and feather, she would've assumed I opened up my end of the marriage and bounced long ago.





You quickly learn that following “bites” takes you to places that society forgets about from the end of the bite till right up until the next one starts. Small towns, founded on a now defunct railroad that still define the empty main streets with most of the business in these towns moving up to the truck stops on the outskirts. They all have different names but beg the same question, “Who in the hell lives here, and what the fuck do they do?” These answers fade away as you pull up to an unfamiliar ramp, in yet another unfamiliar place. The only comfort is seeing every Bubba, Jeb, and Josiah with rods bent over dotting the alien landscape both up river and down. This shit’s on, and you’re just in time to see something special.



# GET OUT AND FISH



## WITH NEW FRAMES

**MADE FROM OLD NETS.**

When you look through a pair of Costa Untangled sunglasses, you're seeing our vision for healthier oceans. A vision of how high-performance sunglasses can keep fishing nets from our waters and reinvent fishing itself. Discarded fishing nets are the most harmful form of plastic pollution in the ocean, but by partnering with Bureo, we're changing that. Our latest generation from The Untangled Collection is made of 97% recycled fishing nets and 3% performance additives, and now includes four Core Performance styles that are as good for fishing as they are for the ocean.



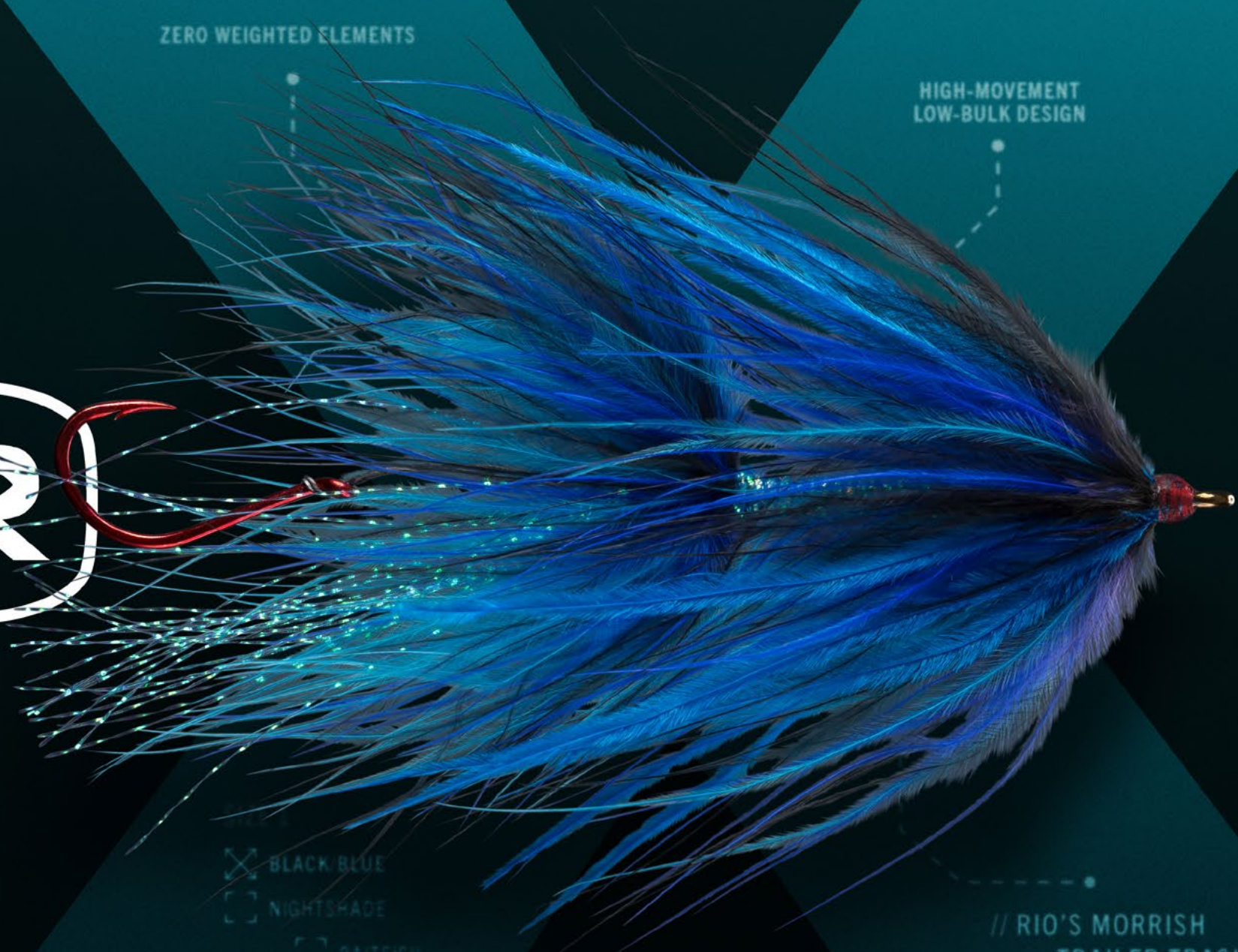
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----- 5" LONG -----

ZERO WEIGHTED ELEMENTS

MARABOU  
INTRUDER STYLE

HIGH-MOVEMENT  
LOW-BULK DESIGN



# Signature Tyer

From the world's best fly tyers—now in your arsenal.

- BLACK/BLUE
- NIGHTSHADE
- BAITFISH
- SHERBERT

// RIO'S MORRISH  
TRAILER TRASH

SHOP NOW

TARGET:  
STEELHEAD

KEN MORRISH

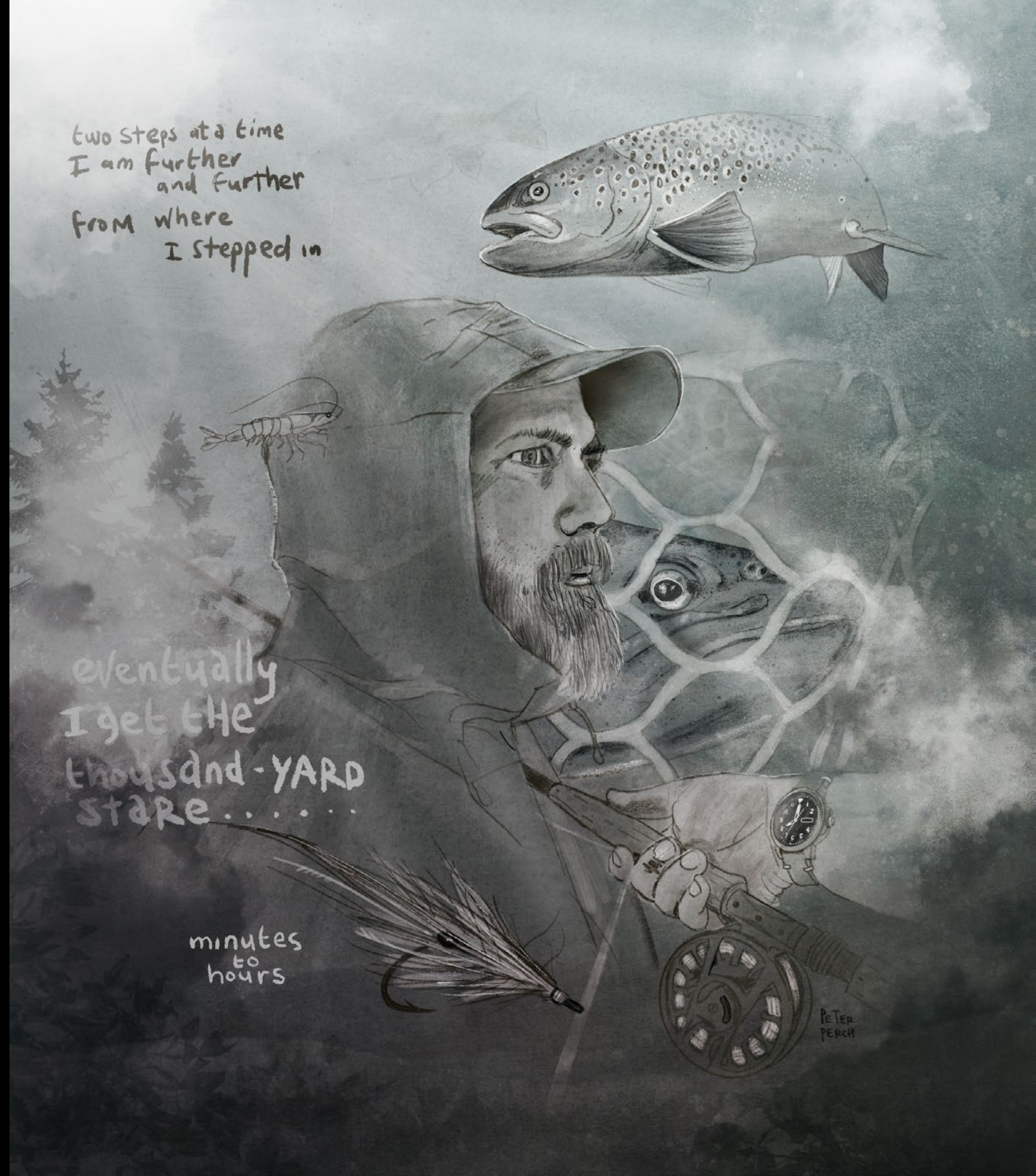


# SEVENTEEN FINNED SYLLABLES

BY MATT SMYTHE

The haiku that reveals seventy to eighty percent of its subject is good. Those that reveal fifty to sixty percent, we never tire of.

— Matsuo Basho



two steps at a time  
I am further  
and further  
from where  
I stepped in

eventually  
I get the  
thousand-YARD  
stare.....

minutes  
to  
hours

PETER  
PERCH



SEVENTEEN FINNED SYLLABLES

BY MATT SMYTHE

when the pere marquette  
is blown

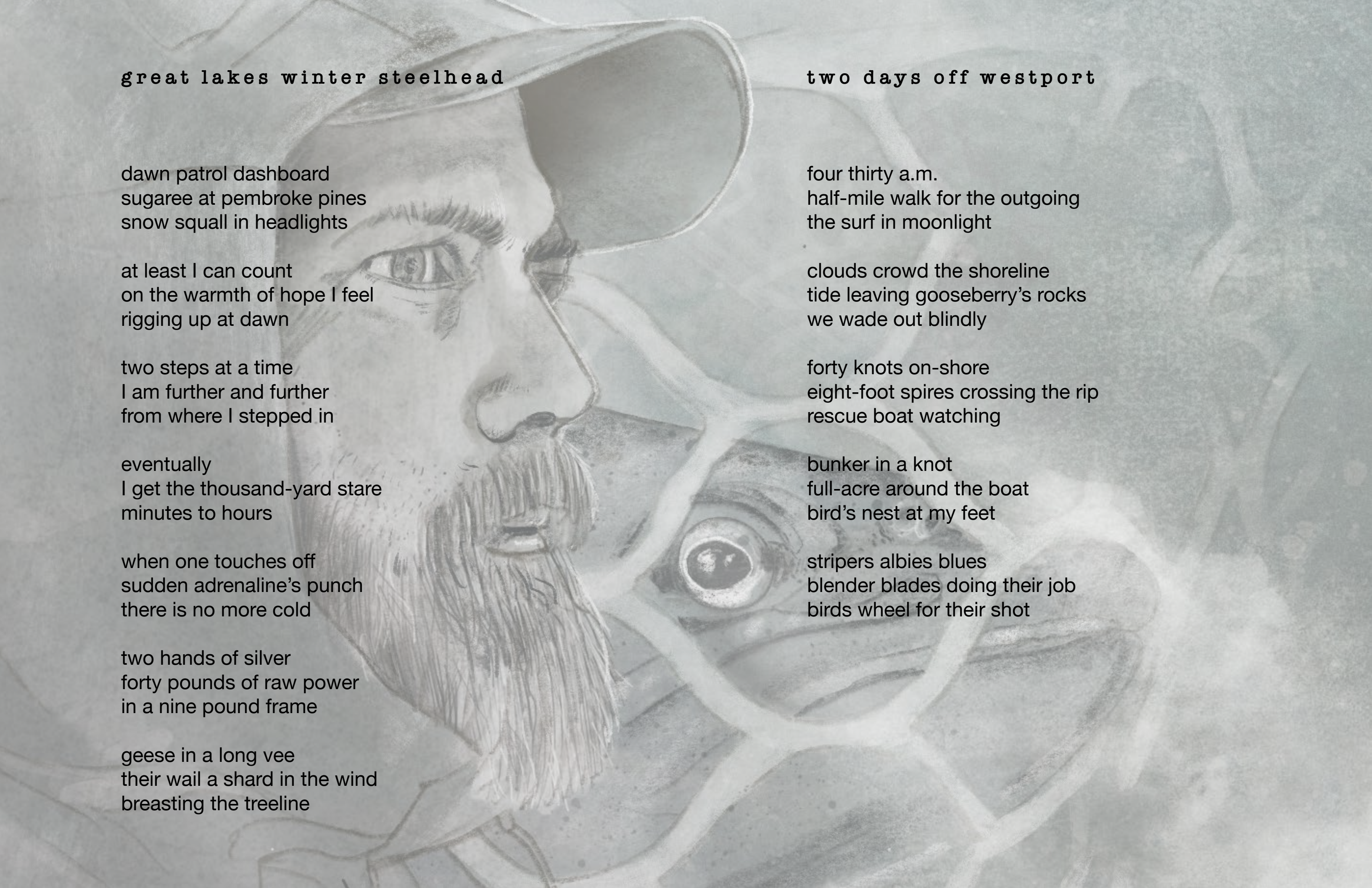
woods full of river  
like a city overrun  
cardinals as streetlights

brown is brown is brown  
except the sun a halo  
in a slate-gray sky

noon-grilled brats and beer  
we forget the taste of skunk  
but really we don't

when the cold gets in  
my backbone wound tight as stone  
bourbon's spark is brief

silence in a boat  
is not silence but presence  
having its own say



great lakes winter steelhead

dawn patrol dashboard  
sugaree at pembroke pines  
snow squall in headlights

at least I can count  
on the warmth of hope I feel  
rigging up at dawn

two steps at a time  
I am further and further  
from where I stepped in

eventually  
I get the thousand-yard stare  
minutes to hours

when one touches off  
sudden adrenaline's punch  
there is no more cold

two hands of silver  
forty pounds of raw power  
in a nine pound frame

geese in a long vee  
their wail a shard in the wind  
breasting the treeline

two days off westport

four thirty a.m.  
half-mile walk for the outgoing  
the surf in moonlight

clouds crowd the shoreline  
tide leaving gooseberry's rocks  
we wade out blindly

forty knots on-shore  
eight-foot spires crossing the rip  
rescue boat watching

bunker in a knot  
full-acre around the boat  
bird's nest at my feet

stripers albies blues  
blender blades doing their job  
birds wheel for their shot



april st. lawrence pike

sink tip double haul  
dialed just in time to lose  
all dexterity

we fish the lee sides  
keeping teeth out of our bones  
but the cold still gnaws

when the mind gives in  
fly on its thousandth return  
the shadow appears

study in muscle  
surveyor and purveyor  
perpetual hunt

in her teeth I find  
the emotionless instinct  
behind her wild eyes

they don't gasp for air  
like other fish brought to hand  
they look right through you

in the main channel  
a hundred yard barge sneaks by  
long haul to the sea

keys strings and solos

two hundred tarpon  
immense shadow on white sand  
choose one choose wisely

strip strip bumpbumpbump  
morse code on the line sadly  
lost in translation

static torpedo  
slack high laid-up and waiting  
uninterested

upper harbor key  
rookery in full riot  
blank horizon west

from this light's angle  
silver from silver to sky  
close to alchemy





south fork late summer

this spring, snowpack's haul  
moved hundred-yard gravel bars  
with stout haymakers

riffles and cutties  
magic hour pulling light's last  
a million matchsticks

every run seems full  
if not fish expectation  
nymph tumbling in

sunrise comes with fog  
softening the line between  
water's song and sky

sparks pop free and rise  
orange braids and crickets' cht-cht  
we're all miles away

while browns chase streamers  
bolt from undercut cliff haunts  
swallows hunt the air

from here on the hill  
the river is silver foil  
and gathers all green

ranch rainbows

the fly shop is full  
sports and bins of sure-fire flies  
we go where they're not

dusty access road  
fences strung tight caldera  
in the gold distance

unhurried story  
punctuation mark every  
five mississippi

phd they said  
hopper and ant a pucker  
upstream of the rise

no breeze in the air  
static clicks of grasshoppers  
her take a whisper



beaver island

hot, one-horse airport  
I bum a ride with locals  
back seat island time

we run to some spots  
crystal teal over white sand  
the tropical north

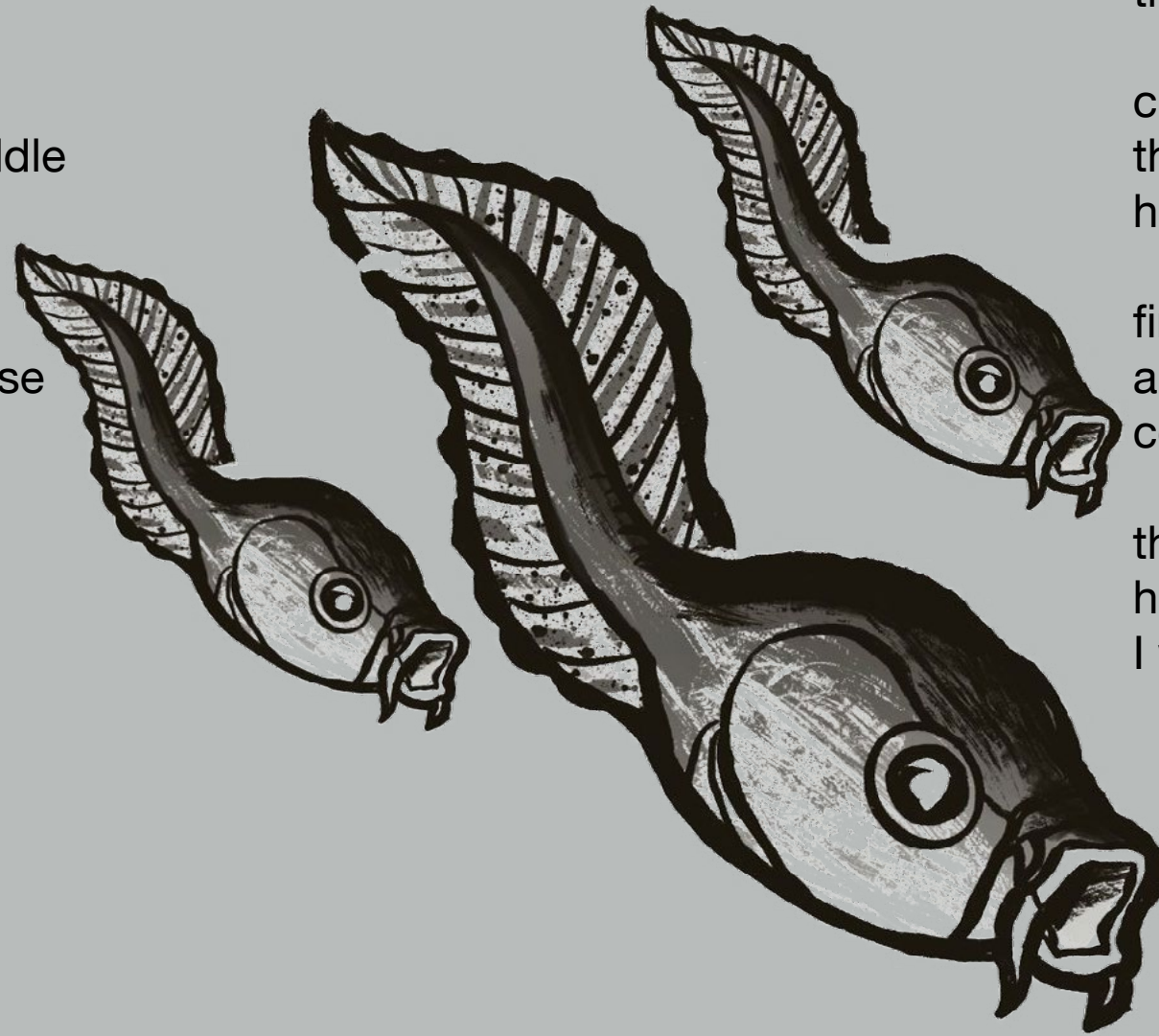
eighty carp knotted  
like tadpoles in a spring puddle  
thump against my legs

there's always a first  
I feed a smallmouth and curse  
the fight as carp spook

here and only here  
mosquitoes incessant buzz  
but an itch-free sting

hiding my shadow  
long slow shoreline armada  
still senses I'm there

it's one long strong pull  
a blue-collar fight and flight  
straight for chicago



arriving in stanley before dawn

no moon in the sky  
sawtooth a mere suggestion  
black space without stars

walk-up coffee shack  
small campfire warms a few souls  
this hour needs no words

clear bone-deep timbre  
the river of no return  
holds tight to its own

fires had left the air  
a gouache that muted the pines  
color behind ash

the moment I leave  
heading south through sun valley  
I wish for more time

big pine reds

daybreak gas station  
subs water ice skiff in tow  
sweet salt in the air

second on the bow  
frigatebirds and blue-rose sky  
soft crunch of the pole

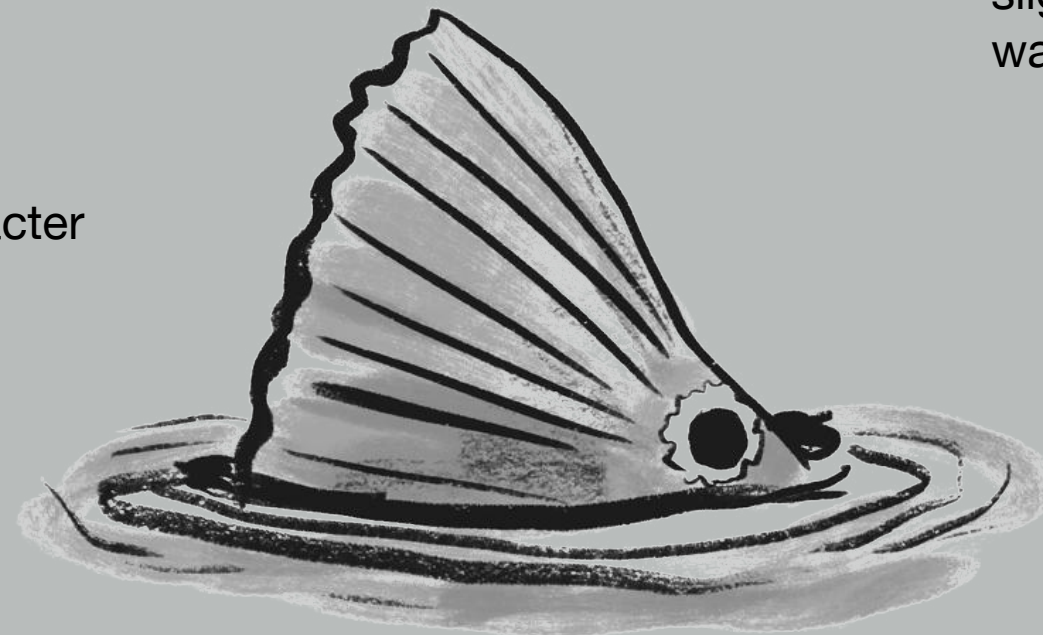
back country low tide  
nurse shark thrashing her belly  
not made for grass

long hours staring  
looking for nervous water  
in small nervous chop

single, happy tail  
one spot like a wink invite  
small breeze at my back

to hold a good red  
strong with rough-hewn character  
a stone mason's hand

sometimes you forget  
how far out you've run for fish  
a good storm reminds



owyhee

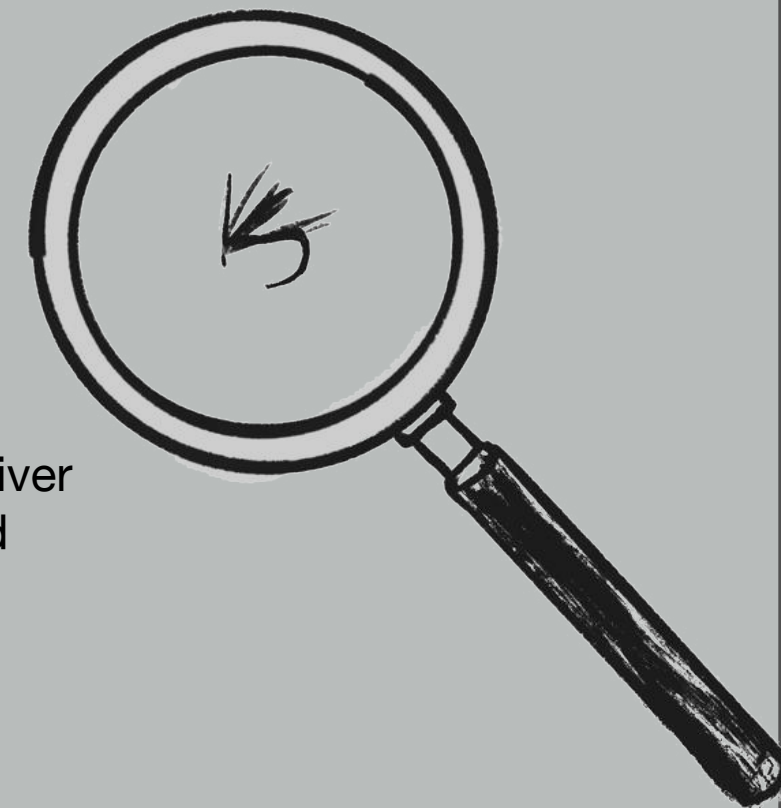
high desert rain storm  
gauzy curtain here and gone  
sage breathing sweetly

rust-red canyon walls  
sparrows dodging for midges  
willows full of ants

smaller and smaller  
fly size as opposed to fish  
twenties hold twenties

blue moon tonight's light  
ink-deep river reflection  
rising browns leave stars

laying my head down  
slight tent billow crickets river  
warmth leaving the ground



five days in the tongass

orca below us  
white foam push surrounds his breach  
our plane climbing west

rising and rising  
kyped maws swinging at stripped flies  
graceful abandon

long gravel-sand bar  
holds a wolf's tracks shadowing  
a black bear and cubs

shoulder to shoulder  
chum in watercolor stripes  
dollies gorge between

lithe glacial fingers  
feed milk-blue-gray to the salt  
soft intersection

where I find one fish  
I find a full hour of fish  
an eagle watches

whistles and hey bear  
soft banks along the river  
sitka spruce echoes

metolius

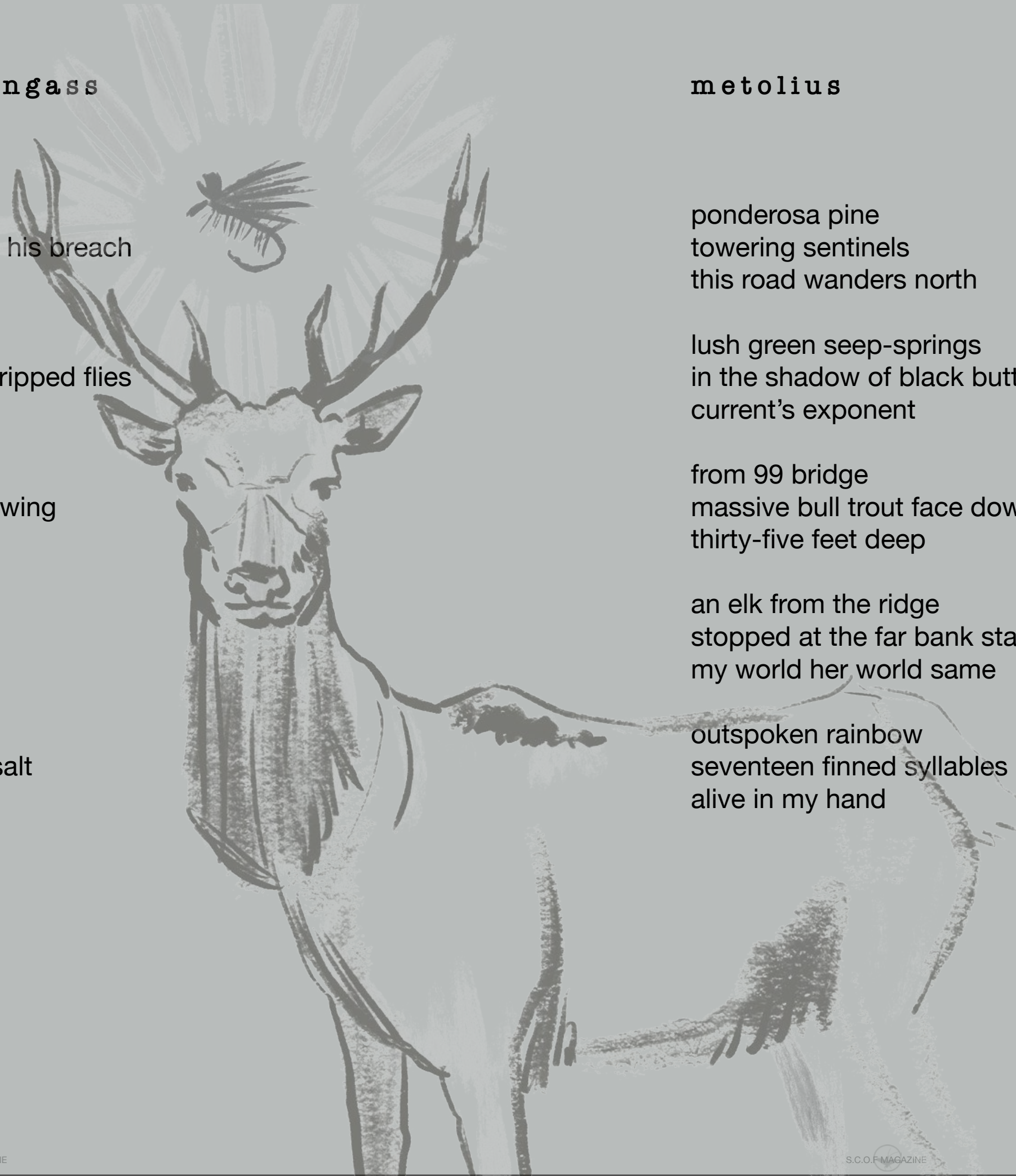
ponderosa pine  
towering sentinels  
this road wanders north

lush green seep-springs  
in the shadow of black butte  
current's exponent

from 99 bridge  
massive bull trout face downstream  
thirty-five feet deep

an elk from the ridge  
stopped at the far bank staring  
my world her world same

outspoken rainbow  
seventeen finned syllables  
alive in my hand



rochester fall run browns

november's clockwork  
daylight water temps align  
tolling man and fish

empty nineteen bridge  
means everything is untouched  
we hustle to park

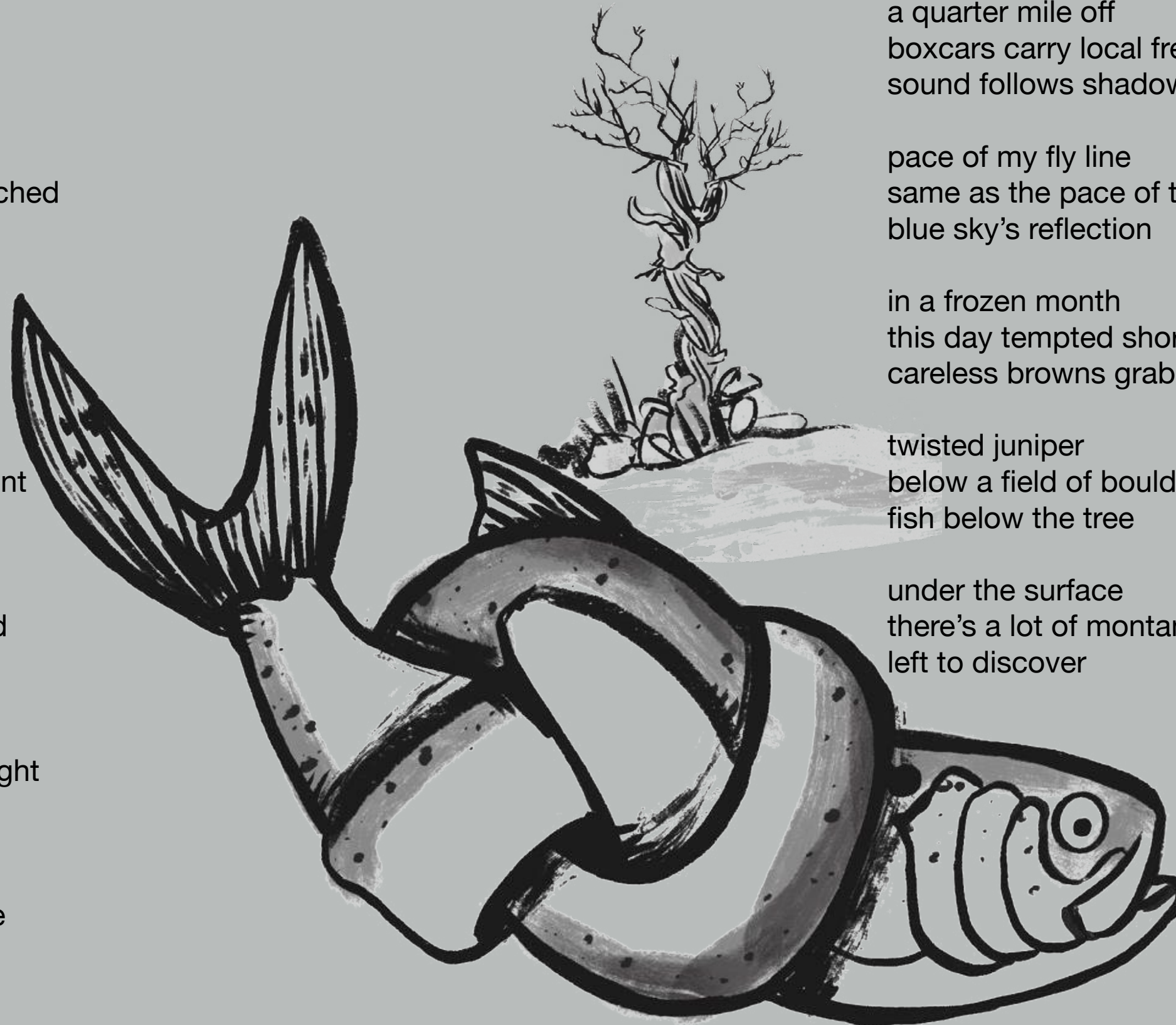
dawn reveals trees first  
in subtle relief from sky  
birds' chit then river

no acrobatics  
they fight deep in the current  
kype to tail anchored

spots like stars flamed out  
halos on orange-yellow-red  
dark constellation

even half submerged  
she is the season's full weight  
iridescent pulse

from a side channel  
mallards explode rise circle  
high gritty whistle



gallatin november

a quarter mile off  
boxcars carry local freight  
sound follows shadow

pace of my fly line  
same as the pace of the boat  
blue sky's reflection

in a frozen month  
this day tempted short-sleeve tees  
careless browns grabbed dries

twisted juniper  
below a field of boulders  
fish below the tree

under the surface  
there's a lot of montana  
left to discover

summer farm pond

walking in tall grass  
dog days' buzz slow to wind down  
the boys bound ahead

they pour over flies  
touching each before choosing  
confident as hounds

dragonflies' quick dap  
dusks' punctuation put down  
between splashy rises

cattail at full height  
red-winged black birds perch and sway  
august warble song

pumpkinseed and bass  
have the boys' full attention  
casts catching last light

every fish a first  
infinite discovery  
handfuls of childhood

our walk out is slow  
they stay close talk in a hush  
smudged shirts hats tipped back



big lost

northwest of mackay  
young mule deer graze on sage-gray  
river glint in green

every spot holds fish  
embarrassment of riches  
there's no rush to cast

at times loose braids flow  
small runs cutting here and there  
casts in tight quarters

geese gabble upstream  
past the flatbed rail car bridge  
past the willow's sweep

flowing to the plain  
this waist-deep rush vanishes  
well-spring in reverse



eventually  
I get the  
thousand-YARD  
stare.....

\* *summer farm pond* first appeared in the *Flyfish Journal*

\* *keys strings and solos* first appeared in *Gray's Sporting Journal*



Photo: Todd Field



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## Drinking Responsibly With Dave: **TECATE**

I bought this 12-pack of Tecate to write a review extolling the pairing of this fine Mexican Budweiser with any nautical activity. In a testament to the thirst quenching deliciousness of this red and silver can of youth, I drank them all before we could take any pictures. I first learned of the magical properties of Tecate, while living out in Colorado. Natural Light used to tout itself as "the beer that goes with food. Tecate is really missing the marketing boat so to speak, not emblazing every can sold with: "The beer that goes with drifting down a river in a boat, while fishing and laughing with your friends." I'm sure it would sound better in Spanish.

The magic I refer to is Tecate's ability to immediately transport you to a beach in the Yucatan, every time you pop that top, no matter how dreary, wet and cold the reality of your surroundings might be. Winter streamer fishing feels like summer wet wading after 11 or 12 Tecate's. You might even lose your head and start stripping down to your skivvies in the middle of January, because your brain is telling you you're in Baja. That's the Tecate, man.

Tecate, like most cervezas, is best enjoyed with a lime. Just be careful when you try to stuff that lime into the aluminum hole. Many amigos have cut their fingers clean off in the pursuit of citrus gratification.





BRING IT BACK WITH

 **BUTTER** YA DIG?  
**STICK** 

# THE SPLEEN OF DARKNESS

By Danny Reed



## There's something special about traveling after an international pandemic.

Over the years, I've made a personal connection with the Brazilian Amazon, and not being able to visit for almost three years was heartbreaking. Not just for me, but more importantly, my friends in the jungle, who rely on American dollars to make it through the year. The relationships I've made there are deeply unique. It's amazing how the love of fishing and the outdoors can tether us to each other. Floating in the depths of the jungle with no cellphones and social media allows for more space to connect. Peacock bass are big, powerful, and beautiful. Sharing the experience of catching these river predators creates a real camaraderie with one another. Though we do not speak each other's language, the angler/guide bond is strong. Seeing my Brazilian brothers on the tarmac this year had the extra special buzz of excitement.

I usually make more time to take pictures when I travel, but the joy of leaving home to root around the wilderness of the Amazons had me living more in the moment and the cast. We fished hard. Honestly we worked for every fish, and the idea of putting down the rod for a camera wasn't even up for consideration. I was just so happy to be present in that place with those special people. In hindsight, I'm glad I still made time to snap a few. I'm thankful for the relationships I've created in Brazil and it feels good to share them with others. I know it's a commitment to make the big trek to the jungle, but if you ever get the chance, you'll never regret it.







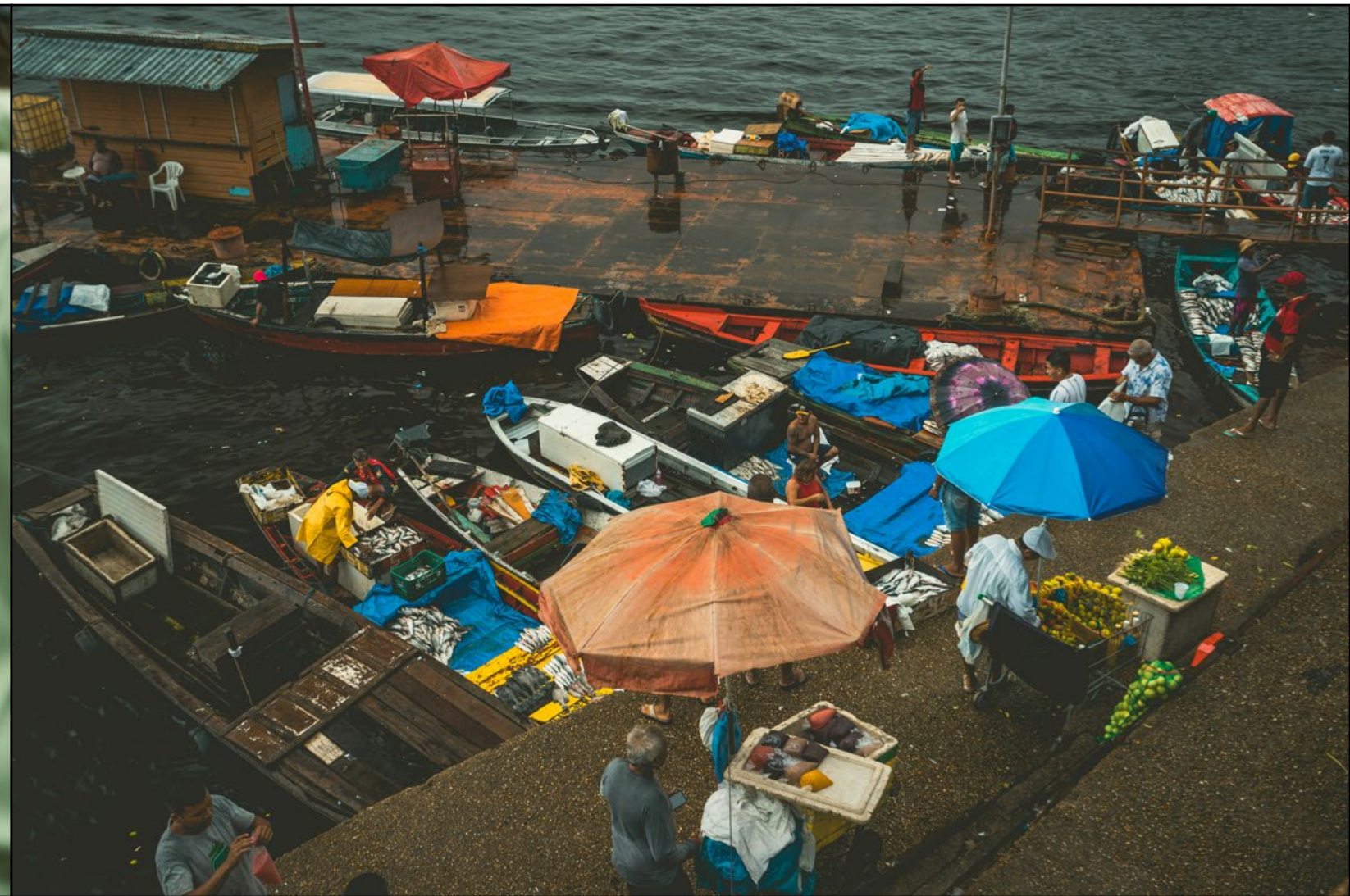






















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**LEMON PRESS**

Capt. Noah Miller

***GLASS***



Capt Noah Miller  
**GLASS**

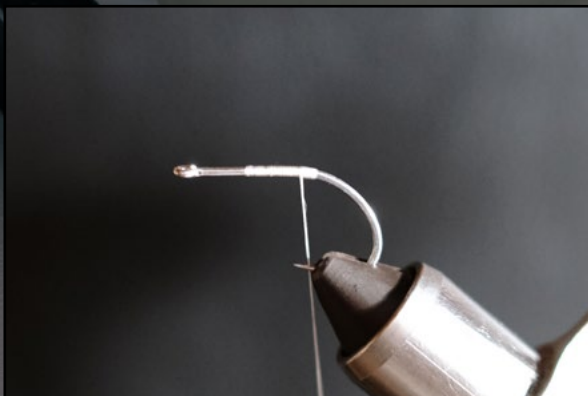
Spring time and early summer on the Space Coast brings glass minnows. These tiny little guys are highly sought after by every game fish species we enjoy catching on the shallow flats here. Snook, tarpon, sea trout and redfish all love to feed on these tiny minnows. They are easy picking and high in protein, making them the perfect snack food for hungry predators. The Glass Minnow fly is simple, small, and effective because it is unintrusive and lands fairly softly but also can perfectly imitate the small prey items these fish enjoy so much. Quick strips to keep the fly up by the surface combined with good timing and a well placed cast will usually get you a good reaction and eat from your target.

#### **Material List:**

Gamakatsu SC15 #1  
Clear angel hair  
White marabou  
White thread  
Black XSmall bead chain eyes  
Solarez thick uv resin



1



2



3



4



5



6



**Step 1:** Tie thread on hook.

**Step 2:** Tie in clear angel hair for the underside of tail.

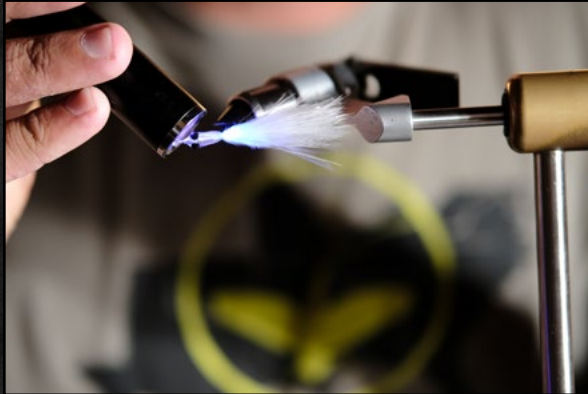
**Step 3:** Tie in a short clump of white marabou on top to complete the tail.

**Step 4:** Trim excess marabou.

**Step 5:** Tie in extra small bead chain eyes 2/3 of the way up from the hook bend.

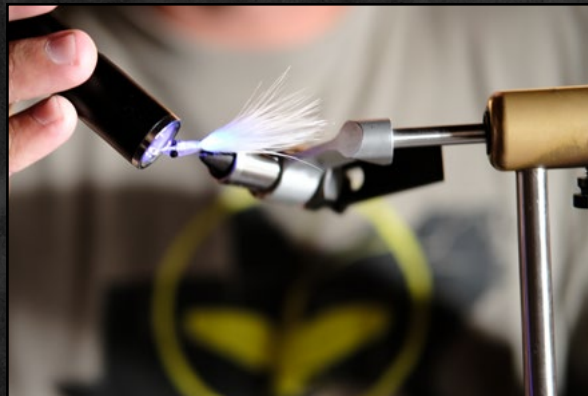
**Step 6:** Build up the thread body to just behind the eye of the hook.

7



**Step 7:** Whip finish and coat with UV epoxy.

8



**Step 8:** Spin fly as curing to insure an even epoxy body.

9



**Step 9:** Fin.





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A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a large, silvery fish with a dark stripe along its side. The fish is held horizontally, with its head to the left and tail to the right. The person's hands are visible, supporting the fish from underneath. The background shows a calm body of water reflecting the sky, with a grassy bank and a boat's outboard motor visible in the distance. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

There's  
Something  
Rotten  
In the  
State of  
Georgia

By David Grossman  
Photos: Chad Dubose



How do you solve a problem **when** the people who are supposed to solve said problem either can't or won't admit a problem even exists? So the logical next question is: How do you convince someone a problem exists?

Now let's just say for argument's sake I want to use facts to convince people who need the convincing. Now, where do we go about finding ourselves some facts? Oh yeah, science. Science has some facts. So it seems at least from a game theory standpoint that science is what we all need. Not the facts your neighbor told you over beers in his new hot tub last weekend. You don't want to get your facts from social media, because those are called opinions. No, when it comes to fisheries management, we should all really be listening to the science and the truths those scientists seek to understand with all their microscopes, beakers, slide rules, and such.





One more leg of this philosophical exercise folks, I swear. Let's say you're trying to convince the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) that Georgia has a redfish problem. The GDNR tells you that they don't do science, just regulations. That you need to talk to the state's Coastal Research Development agency (CRD) to see if the science says that something needs to be done. So you saunter on down to the CRD only to be told they don't have a whole lot of science on redfish, nor do they plan on getting it any time soon. Well that, my friends, is what I call a real doozy of a two-zy.

Georgia's got a redfish problem. With South Carolina to the north and Florida to the south, Georgia's coastal red fishery is the only sandwich I've ever heard of where the bread is better than the meat. I am not here to cast neighborly aspersions, but the fishing is just quantifiably better to the north and south than it is in Georgia. Catch rates, average-size redfish, and just the general health of redfish stocks have been on a continual downward spiral. Its neighbors, while not perfect by any measure, have fared remarkably better the last few

decades. Habitat, bait populations, and other environmental factors over this period of time haven't been mysteriously worse for Georgia than Florida and South Carolina, so why is it that their fisheries are regarded as far better off than Georgia's? It doesn't take much science-ing to figure out the linchpin to this non-mystery. Georgia hasn't changed its creel limits since 1991, and slot sizes since 2001. Now while the harvest regulations haven't changed in more than a couple of decades, other things have happened along Georgia's coast, like a population boom that's predicted to continue for at least the next decade. Call it urban flight, lifestyle choice, or anything else, the numbers can't be denied. Simple elementary school math also shows that the population growth has mirrored the growing number of anglers fishing Georgia's coastal waters. And more people fishing means for people keeping fish. These undeniable upward trends demonstrate (with math) that Georgia's redfish are under an assault the likes of which haven't been seen since the dark days of Paul Prudhomme and his devilishly delicious blackened redfish recipe.

The states surrounding Georgia have seen the same trends and extrapolated the same conclusions, but instead of denying that a problem exists, those states have been willing to change their regulations to protect their fish stocks. And let's not be naive, those states have a huge financial interest in those fish.

As Nino Brown so eloquently put it, "Money talks, and bullshit runs the marathon." In terms of state budgets and such, fish mean money. If your state has excellent fisheries, your state is collecting license fees, usage fees, sales tax, and even income tax all off the back of the fish that swim its waters, and they are more than happy to count their scale-backs. You ruin the fishery with bad management, and those funds go next door. In Georgia, if you talk to guides and shops, they all gaze jealousy at the sheer number of anglers South Carolina and Florida draw. This is not to say that Florida and South Carolina have it all figured out and should be held up as a glowing beacon in this dark conservation world. Not in the slightest. But hell, at least they do the bare minimum—examine their own regulations and adjust them according to the best interest of the fishery. That bare minimum makes all the difference in the world when you ask most Georgia anglers, and that difference is as plain as day in the state's bottom line relative to its neighbors.



There are a lot of problems in the world that are complex, nuanced, one might even say wonky. Georgia's redfish are not one of those problems. It's as simple as changing the regulations to match the modern era, and no longer feeding the anglers of Georgia the same old bullshit line of, "...move along, nothing to see here."

*This is a problem we can fix with sheer will and harrasment of the powers that be. Check out the Georgia Saltwater Angler's Association [here](#) to get intio this fight.*

*www.TheFiberglassManifesto.com*



**#glassisnotdead**

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Photo: Dave Fason



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