

The Settler
by Cid Brunet

Ice will lid the river monster. A fish
in each hand to pacify the settler
who reclines, smoking, on burlap packed with salt.
With pelts and wealth, ambitions rise.
All evidence is in the blood spot.
Pilgrim; your teeth are parasite white.

Full moon crows moon bone white.
Wriggling into cold mud, lowly fish
know a harvest moon. They can spot
smoke rings blown into the stars by the settler.
He cleans his rifle. Slow to rise
heavy with gout, hard cheese and salt.

The hung carcass will need to be salt
rubbed to protect the meat from white
maggots who pool, spill, and rise.
Attacking unfortunate flesh like piranha fish.
Devastating sliver moons. Not unlike settler
families; swarming and breeding to claim a spot

which cannot be claimed. A black mold spot
growing. Sewing the soil with salt.
God granted him dominion with title; settler.
He brought his empty children. Just a white
skull where a face should be. Clammy fish
bellied palms rushing like a river on the rise

to colonize tributaries. The bleeding sunrise
transcended by an electric generation. Rare to spot
a golden birch or pick a morel. To glimpse a fish,
or witness a grizzly not taxidermied with salt
and sawdust. The sardonic museum sign, white,
described majesty to the children of the settler.

Unconvinced by facsimiles, the children of the settler
giggled at nature's oafish representation. Gave rise
to a creeping shame. Why would the white
tailed deer be reminiscent of grandfather's cancer spot?
A boring ghost with spit encrusted lips like sea salt.
Yet, at the exit, the children overlooked a prophetic fish;

Do not dream of us fish, you youthful settler.
Your blood is mostly salt. My fins cannot rise
from the grave spot you left me in; baking and white.