

GREAT RIVER REVIEW
GREAT BIVER BEVIEW



In Any Season

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Trout—rainbow; bass—small or large
mouth; pike, walleye, and bluegill;
he fishes them all from their water
in or out of season. He stands above
them on the dock, at the shore,
careful that the sun not shadow him
across early water. He baits hooks,
selects lures. He wades into running
streams with hand-woven flies and casts
loops of line into the very spot
where the trout mouths bubbles, waiting.
He walks on ice, cuts two holes,
drops a tripline into each and waits
in winter winds for a bell to ring,
signaling. And when the fish is beached,
panting on the sand, pulled into the boat,
netted from the stream, lying on the ice,
he slips the steel loop through its gills,
out its lipless mouth, and snaps it shut.

In every season, under any sky,
he passionlessly pulls fish from
their water, locks them by the gills,
and lets them drown in the clear air
he himself must breathe. He may admire
the silvered flesh, the arc into the air,

the splash of red-stained water at sunset,
the tug of line, the whiz of reel,
the fight of fish into the straining net.
But—pike or trout, bass or salmon,
muskie, perch or bluegill—he pans
them all like gold from the rushing
of water. He pans them all in butter
above the snapping fire. He builds
his flesh from the meat of fish
dragged stupid but magnificent from
the cool dark shallows. He touches
the hook to his thumb, brings out a bead
of red, and tastes fish blood in his.