

Cathy

‘See yon hyeuk?’ says Cathy.
‘Yon’s ma life.’
Three-quarters of an inch of steel,

Barbed at the hyeutter, bent,
It glitters
Like a jewel.

Tiny. Cathy, six stone, volatile as petrol,
Wiry, lean,
Puts on her shawl.

Pleased to see you, kettle on,
Deaf as a sharpening stone
To every sound

Except the wireless static crackle
From the boat,
A little whirlwind,

She pegs the sheets out in the back yard,
Scrubs the step, stirs the pan,
Swabs the floor:

‘When fetter hord it was
Another girl
He slammed the door.

Aye, but
He couldn’t dae wi’oot dowters, ye kna.’

Cathy, bent
Beneath the creel:
Home from the mussel beds, the limpet pool;

Six stone of haddocks haa’ked around Reed Raa’,
Husband, in-laws, tugging at her, kin
Needing her care,

Mussels to skeyn,
The boat to launch, lines to bait, claes to poss,
Sons to bear;

Cathy, bent with pains,
Years; busy as a sanderling,
Never still,

Down the harbour with the barrow, eyes
Blue as the Coquet, bright
As steel,

As hard, as sharp, as necessary
As a fish-hook
To the house, the men;

Cathy, without whom
A coble could not go to sea — as vital to it
As diesel, or the wind.

— Katrina Porteous, Beadnell, Northumberland, England
(from *Two Countries*, Bloodaxe Books. 2014.)

What’s new at the 2017 FisherPoets Gathering

If only fishing seasons were like this, each one the biggest yet. Who’s even had time to count all the fisher-poets joining us for the 20th annual FisherPoets Gathering? Not us. We’ve deck-loaded seven venues with them, though, and welcome the new voices among us, young and old, come from far and near.

From Alaska, Maggie Bursch, Maria Dosal and Jerre Wills join us for the first time. Kirk Lombard has come up from San Francisco. Abigail Martin joins her dad from Broadus, Montana. Washington sends us Elma Burnham, Amy Grondin, Annie Howell-Adams, Jeffrey Kahrs, Dennis Knagin, Don Pugh and Kendall Rock. Phil Meehan has come over from Portland. From here near the mouth of the Columbia Danny Keyser, RK and Cherry Rice, and Taylor Young have stopped by.

We’ve had to start at 5

p.m. to get us all aboard. The Liberty Theater has invited us in Saturday night to be sure there is room enough for fisherpoet friends and fans.

Like almost always, the FisherPoets Gearshack has a new address. This year we thank Mimi Rose for giving us 1184 Commercial for the weekend. We’re no longer wrestling there with old credit card machines and can thank Amanda Gladics for introducing us to 21st century technology at the cashier’s desk. You’ll find, among scores of inviting items at the silent auction and books and CDs by your favorite fisherpoets, Ray Troll’s terrific art on our 20th annual FisherPoets Gathering poster and T-shirts.

Since space was limited this year at the Columbia River Maritime Museum, we’ve wandered down to Pier 39 Saturday morning for some of our workshops.



PATRICK DIXON

PDIXONPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Ed Edmo of Portland will read during the 6 p.m. set Friday at Columbian Theater and at 8 p.m. Saturday at Fort George.

There’s parking for most of you who aren’t taking an early walk.

You won’t find Cold Stream tied up for a visit this year, unfortunately. Though she’s in good shape, Dave Densmore’s been in the shipyard himself. You might see him crutching around on a new ankle, a poem or two sticking out his back pocket.

Don’t bump him.

In addition to extending open mic hours to 3 to 5 p.m. both nights at WineKraft, we’ve finagled an invitation from Rebecca Kraft to singers and their friends to gather there starting at 10 p.m. Saturday night. It could become a tradition.

We’ve included in the program a lovely poem by fisherpoet Katrina Porteous who joined us a few years ago clear from England, which she sent this week with her good wishes for our 20th annual Gathering. *Cathy* celebrates a hard-working woman like those others we know, like us. See how it sounds aloud. Maybe ask George Wilson to read it for you.

The rest of the 2017 FisherPoets Gathering should feel familiar to folks who’ve been with us awhile. We’re glad you’re here and look forward to spending the weekend with you, maybe the best ever. Again.

FisherPoets Gathering thanks its silent auction donors

Come by the FisherPoets Gathering Gearshack at 1184 Commercial St. and have a look. Bidding starts at 1 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24 and ends at 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25.

Astoria Business Equipment Company
Adagio
Astoria Coffeehouse & Bistro
Astoria Co-op Grocery
Astoria Holiday Inn Express
Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce
Baked Alaska restaurant
Bank of the Pacific
Blue Scorcher Bakery
Bridgewater Bistro
Brownsmead Flats
Cannery Bunkhouse at Pier 39
Cannery Pier Hotel
Cargo



PATRICK DIXON/

PDIXONPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Mariah Warren of Sitka, Alaska, will emcee Friday at the Fort George Lovell Showroom.

Carol Newman
Carruthers restaurant
Clatsop County Historical Society
Coast Community Radio
Columbia River Coffee Roaster
Columbia River Eco Tours
Columbia River Maritime Museum

Columbia Riverkeeper
Commercial St. Antiques
Copper River Fleece
Fernhill Glass
Finn Ware
Fishpeople Seafood, Duncan Berry
Forsythea
Fort George Brewery
Four Winds Canvas Works
Fulio’s Pastaria
Gimre’s Shoes
Gulley’s Butcher Shop
Hotel Elliott
Icicle Seafoods, Larsen
Bay AK
Imogen Gallery
In the Boudoir
Jill McVarish, artist
Josephson’s Specialty
Seafood Products
LaRee Johnson & Andy
Ciers
Lightbox Photographic Gallery

Lost Art Originals
Lucy Barna Jewelry
Maiden Astoria
Myhermade Design
Mary Davies
Meg B Jones Jewelry
Old Town Framing
Pat Dixon Photography
Purple Cow Toys
Ratz and Co., artist Dave McMacken
Ray Troll
Rogue Ales Public House
Senator Betsy Johnson
Sesame And Lily
Skipanon Brand Seafood
Studio 11, Jamie Boyd
Studio 11, John Clark
Sweater Heads
Ted Messing
Victoria and Anthony
Stoppioello
Warrenton Deep Sea Market
Wild Product Seafood