



Paper Mill Press

Casting Lines

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I can't help but think about how my father felt when his feet got wet. I can't help but wonder if it was really money or wet socks that drove him away from here.

The salt and moisture embedded in my shoes is a bane I endure because I have faith that being here means something. The running water I walk through reminds me that this frozen city thaws with every rising sun. I watch it set in the south west and if I look hard enough I can just see the green of my old home. There things grow across any vacant surface. Grass and leaves paint the landscape with fingers that reach up to a sun that is not so far away. There both the sun and the earth warm you. Your mind can be at ease, your feet dry. You're free to ignore those little things like slush and rain and wet that bind you to the geography. But here it is still winter and I hang the soles of my shoes over a heater every night and await that renaissance of summer that I've been promised. Everything moves slower here, more personal. I've gotten to know the snow, the ice, the salt, the sea and the rock. Back home I watched things flourish and die without ever being acquainted. But here, here I know the grass, the wild raspberries, the lichen that clings to stunted trees. I know the rivers and the rippling torrents that my father introduced me to.

I remember when he came to visit at the end of summer. We grabbed his old fly rods and he took me to a river near where he grew up. He told me about how things had changed. He told me about how when things were good they built a highway right next to the stream he would once walk miles to get to. Now the highway is seldom travelled and poorly maintained but remains as a scar across what was once a good place to get a salmon. As we casted at nothing he told me about how fish would once fight each other to get ahold of his hook.

All things change and Newfoundland is no exception, I know this. But it becomes so much more real, more personal, wading in a river listening to the words of my father. "There's not a thing here anymore that used to be." he says. There was longing. He

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stared down the river as if it went all the way back to his childhood. "No sense in even coming here" he says. But I know he lies, and I know he hopes that I won't believe him. Why else would we be here, feet wet, wading in a river? We weren't just to casting lines; we weren't just fishing for salmon either.

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