

"Dipnet"

(By a Tired Red and Unsuccessful King)

By Robin B Lipinski

Kenai River running cold, running gray.
Mountains of ice melting, melting to carry smolt away.
Cycle of life interacting with the cycle of me.

Long was the winter, now waiting in temporary warmth for more.
As seasons change so too do fish, struggling in ocean waters to grow and succeed.
They sought refuge in numbers, in waters dark and deep, growing, waiting, to again come to me.

Today was the day, tide high just before it recedes; the bag of the net bit the water, thirsty in greed.

"Fish on," was the shout as Red's hit the web, tangled, turning red as their blood spilled.

One after the other, the pile of fish grew.

One after the other, the metal bound net did feed.

"Five more to go then we're through."

One after the other, our number grew.

"One-hundred and four, one more then we're through."

One-hundred large fish fed full and plump, lay cold upon our cold deck.

One-hundred large fish, once so full of life, lay as a warm memory as our families would be fed.

One-hundred-five and he broke my net.

Chinook.

King.

Onkos- rynchos, tshawytscha, or whatever kingly words you choose to use.

Smashing hard into the hoop he sped, running full speed away from the seal.

A bloody gash on his side, he tore my net.

With a shout, aid was called, friends turned, hands reached, webbing grasped, the King failed.

One-hundred-four Red's are tired and in the freezer.

One King succeeded in escaping the seal, destroyed the web yet still failed.

One-hundred-five fish are frozen in silence, awaiting this winter to be a warm memory as our families are fed.

The End