

A SHRIMP BOAT IN PORT ARANSAS, TEXAS CALLS AN AUNT TO MIND

The boats return with their shrimp.
Dreams get wasted. Money goes fast.
Gasoline is high. Shrimp prices are low.
How can anyone make a living?

I come from Louisiana,
but now I feel like a Texan.
Think of all the people
who have to leave their homes
and go to other states for work!

The old man sits in his boat. Aransas.
A pipe. A son. Three dogs. Chickens.
He works his own nets. Fixes his own motor.
His wife knits. If *he* is not happy,
then she is. If he has lost his cat,
she has gained her son. *If the Lord wants me,*
he says, *I'll be right here.*

My aunt was a shrimper from Grande Isle,
Louisiana. I think I was ten.
In her small boat a gnat flew in my ear.
It hurt. I told her. She took a long draw
on her Camel and blew smoke in my ear.
Oh, Aunt Bessie, *that* got the gnat out.