

# ALICE PHILLIPS

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## Fishing

buying fish is a delicate exercise  
will it be pink terrace of snapper  
– slightly open at the mouth or the  
touch me lightly blush of smoked trout

should i rescue the tiny fish  
with eyes like stones on ironsand  
or should i go for the boned  
and skinned just apply flavour

fisherboy picks the choicest weighs it  
in his hand feels the silver sheathed  
cascade of scale upon scale says  
'one day old with taste of sea'

i notice how wet the fish looks  
how surprised at being plucked from  
the ocean laid bare on steel  
– put out for show

perhaps I should eat happier fish  
no fear in their body no stiffening  
of muscle as knife slices through  
soft tissue to trembling organ

i think of fish in batter sprig of parsley  
touch of lemon simmering mound of flesh  
i think of making love  
how to negotiate bones.