

I don't remember my father ever asking me if commercial fishing was something that I enjoyed doing, it was just something we did.

I inherited a place in an exhausting, male dominated industry, without ever realizing that I had a choice in the matter. Fishing was passed down to me like a Christmas tradition, or my grandmother's jewelry; similar to those objects, there's no way to calculate the exact value of such an inheritance, or the subsequent impact on my life.

Images of me, young, on the boat. Transition to hand-drawn image of a girl holding a fish with a question mark over her head.

music: Ben Howard, Old Pine

My grandfather fished double ender sailboats in Bristol Bay. Some people caught gold-fever, but my grandfather was gripped by a different sort of fever, one that held on with relentless tenacity. He pursued his dream of being a fisherman from the dustbowl of Oklahoma to the mudflats of Naknek.

Video of hand drawn images of a double-ender sailboat, and a map with an arrow from Oklahoma to Alaska.

<p>Apparently the fever was contagious, and my father caught it, too.</p>	
<p>I couldn't help feeling that it wasn't just an option to enjoy fishing, but it was my obligation to love it. However, as an 11 year old girl, I wasn't quite sold.</p>	<p>Drawn image of a heart with a question mark in it.</p>
<p>Not only do fishermen keep odd hours, (often staying up in 24 hour fishing periods), but the work is physically demanding: there were times when I truly didn't feel like I could wake up to keep working the next day. With a gillnet, each salmon must be individually un-strangled from the net. On our good days we pull in over 20,000 pounds of salmon. You can do the math - that's a lot of salmon to move around. In the morning, I test-flex my tired, swollen fingers, and then shove them back in their rubber-gloved prisons to pick another net full of salmon.</p>	<p>Pictures from the boat of our big days, transition to hand writing the numbers 20,000 transition to hand drawn image of unhappy hands and rubber gloves.</p>

<p>32 feet of living and work space takes on a new level of intimacy when you have to share it with three other people for six weeks.</p>	<p>Drawn image of 32 ft of space with 4 uncomfortable people.</p>
<p>I didn't love fishing all at once; it was a slow fall of accumulated moments. A collection of smiles from my father, laughter from my siblings, and shared meals at the end of a long day.</p>	<p>Picture of family on the boat in the cabin.</p>
<p>I fell into the tidal rhythms; working our nets and searching for the lithe bodies of salmon in the water. I let the sunsets and sunrises that nobody but the fishermen in Alaska see, be my reward for hard labor. I lost myself in the daylight and broad expanse of clouds on an uninterrupted horizon, and learned to accept the storms that keep the sky dark for days and chop the water into a seething frenzy. Slowly I discovered that I wanted to see fishing from my father's perspective; how he knew where the salmon</p>	<p>Pictures of the sunsets fading into each other.</p> <p>Music: Tycho, Plains</p> <p>Picture of my dad on the boat.</p>

<p>ventured, which size of mesh to use in the nets, the undercurrents of the fishery.</p>	
<p>I now see the beauty in fishing, as well as my ability to take part in a family tradition - not just as an obligation, but something that I enjoy doing. Throughout the years, taking on more responsibilities has also meant making more mistakes. I know that growth occurs in the spaces of those mistakes, and the times of absolute frustration and exhaustion.</p>	<p>Pictures of the family on the boat together.</p>
<p>Like the salmon, I return to the fishing grounds every year; I, too, am pulled by the tides and born on a current I don't fully comprehend. Now I yield to the draw and enjoy the journey.</p>	<p>Picture of me on the flying bridge, transition to a shot of the Ruby, transition to image of red salmon in a stream in Lake Iliamna.</p>