

not "a" symbol?

The Fish

1st pov.

I caught a tremendous fish and held him beside the boat half out of water, with my hook fast in a corner of his mouth.

usually denot. age

(5) repeat.

He didn't fight.

Synonym.

He hadn't fought at all.

He hung a grunting weight, battered and venerable and homely. Here and there

contrast bet.

similes

(10)

his brown skin hung in strips like ancient wallpaper, and its pattern of darker brown was like wallpaper: shapes like full-blown roses

Symb.

blood

(15)

stained and lost through age. He was speckled with barnacles, fine rosettes of lime, and infested

Symb. of balance hope + new beginnings beauty + danger

with tiny white sea-lice, and underneath two or three rags of green weed hung down.

While his gills were breathing in the terrible oxygen

not fighting, but still breathing

(25)

fresh and crisp with blood, that can cut so badly-

I thought of the coarse white flesh packed in like feathers,

(30)

the dramatic reds and blacks of his shiny entrails,

contracts

and the pink swim bladder like a big peony,

(35)

I looked into his eyes which were far larger than mine but shallower, and yellowed,

the irises backed and packed with tarnished tinfoil seen through the lenses

metaphors

(40)

of old scratched isinglass.

They shifted a little, but not to return my stare.

-It was more like the tipping of an object toward the light.

simile

(45)

I admired his sullen face, the mechanism of his jaw, and then I saw

that from his lower lip -if you could call it a lip- grim, wet, and weaponlike, smile hung five old pieces of fishline or four and a wire leader with the swivel still attached, with all their five big hooks grown firmly in his mouth.

(50)

(55)

A green line, frayed at the end where he broke it, two heavier lines, and a fine black thread still crimped from the strain and snap when it broke and he got away.

past tense - used to fight

(60)

Like medals with their ribbons frayed and wavering, a five-haired beard of wisdom trailing from his aching jaw.

(65)

I stared and stared and victory filled up the little rented boat

religious/symb.

(70)

from the pool of bilge where oil had spread around the rusted engine to the bailer<sup>3</sup> rusted orange,

Symb. of hope/renewal

(75)

the sun-cracked thwarts,<sup>4</sup> the oarlocks<sup>5</sup>-until everything was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!

-Elizabeth Bishop (1979)

<sup>1</sup> plant of the buttercup family, usually featuring double flowers of red, pink, or white  
<sup>2</sup> a semi-transparent whitish gelatin derived from the bladders of fish and used to make windows  
<sup>3</sup> pail used to bail out water  
<sup>4</sup> a rower's seat  
<sup>5</sup> var. of gunwale; the upper edge of the sides of the boat

\* free verse

\* Imagery = appreciation for fish

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\* Color symbolism - heavy w/ build up to = rainbow

- brown - white
- green - orange
- blacks - pink
- reds
- yellow

Symbolic! of hope (renewal)