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Erratum
Featured Poet

This poem is available in Forces: https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/forces/vol2009/iss1/49
The speaker is speaking about the scientific study of DNA sequencing. From ethnographic field observations of ancestral populations spread over geographic regions they can determine if there are genetic variations that result in downstream problems.

My mind is wondering and wandering through Elizabeth Bishop’s “The Fish”
I have my mother’s eyes
and her toes, her father’s ears and when I took them
My father’s fingers and freckles
his mother’s nose and smile
I am simply tiny parts of parts of people who are all
If I knew I would get high blood pressure
like my mother and my mother’s father
or have a heart attack like my father
and my father’s father or have an onset
of inherited illness would my hope for my own life become
Could I go on knowing my fate
Would I remain the same or change
Would I be a better person for it
Would I be both happier and healthier
or driven mad like Oedipus and gouge my sockets until
Maybe if I knew when their parts
would overtake my parts
I wouldn’t sit and wait for it
Maybe I would live every day like an end
being joyous and unafraid then smiling tell Death that
In all these borrowed parts of parts
is anything really mine
except the acquired scars and the hair
color that covers inherited gray
How do you live life knowing that even at its best it is
and you are roe in the downstream current
The speaker is done speaking. She is asking for questions.

Elizabeth Bishop’s “The Fish”
I caught a tremendous fish
He didn’t fight.
He hadn’t fought at all.
He hung a grunting weight,
battered and venerable
and homely. Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper,
and its pattern of darker brown
stained and lost through age.
He was speckled with barnacles,
with tiny white sea-lice,
While his gills were breathing in
the terrible oxygen
fresh and crisp with blood,
I thought of the coarse white flesh
the big bones and the little bones,
and the pink swim-bladder
I looked into his eyes
I admired his sullen face,
and the mechanism of his jaw,
grim, wet, weaponlike,
and a fine black thread
when it broke and he got away.
frayed and wavering,
a five-haired beard of wisdom
And I let the fish go.