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Morro Bay (Virg's Landing) 47 anglers,  
(3boats) 31 ling cod, 50 red rock cod...  
Joe's eyes are closed. I don't know if he can  
hear me from the other side of the oxygen tent.  
He is partially paralyzed from a stroke. Through  
slurred speech and at a whisper, I gathered that  
this, my reading the fishing report out loud,  
is what he wants of me.

Santa Barbara (Sea Landing) 17 anglers (2  
boats) 22 red snapper, 84 rockfish, 3 sheephead.  
Uncle Joe, I say "Those are some pretty god-  
damned ugly fish. I wonder if sheephead taste as  
bad as they look?"  
He purses his lips, but no words come. His  
eyes remain closed. The fish report works like a  
lullaby.

In the archives of the old LA Herald Examiner,  
the storyline from July 1, 1963 ran: Sorry Charlie,  
Joe Perez catches first albacore of the season.  
The time of the catch was 6:14 am. The weight of  
the fish and the location of the catch were includ-  
ed in the article. His picture was not. Someone,  
maybe the captain of the boat or guys from the

shop or the Herald Examiner itself, also gave him  
a plaque. I was a kid then, so I don't remember  
exactly. Joe loved to deep-sea fish. If asked, he'd  
tell you that his favorite fish to catch and eat  
would be albacore, or as he called it, chicken of  
the sea.

The fish report could be found in a small box  
in the back of the sports section of the daily  
paper. It would list the fishing locations through-  
out the state, the number of boats and fishermen  
and the numbers and types of fish caught each  
day.

If one did the math; the number of fish caught,  
divided by the number of anglers, one could easi-  
ly see where the best fishing was to be had.  
San Pedro (22nd St Landing)  
His breath is heavier, long and drawn. Drool  
runs down his chin. The way that his mouth  
opens and closes reminds me of a fish on deck.  
178 anglers (7 boats) 80 albacore..... Now  
we're talking Uncle Joe!  
26 blue fin tuna, 1 barracuda, 20 red snapper,  
314 sand bass....



Conrad Romo is a second generation LosAngeleno. He grew up on the other side of the tracks short, stocky and swarthy. He produces "Tongue & Groove", a monthly reading event at the Hotel Café, now into it's sixth year. He also produced Palabrazilla, a 2 day 12 venue collaboration of spoken word venues from around LA. Stay tuned for a return later this year. He has studied with Lynda Barry and Jack Grapes. His short story, "Cement God" was recently featured in Tu Ciudad magazine and also appears in the anthology, Latinos in Lotusland . He's also been published in Palehouse, Wednesday Magazine, Noveltown Review, Brooklyn & Boyle and Los Angeles Review. He can be reached at [www.tongueandgroove.com](http://www.tongueandgroove.com)

