

DISTANT WATER: The Fate of the North Atlantic Fisherman

by William W. Warner
 Little, Brown, 1983
 338 pp. \$17.95

Combining an overview of the North Atlantic fishing industry since World War II with a firsthand look at the fishermen's daily lives, Warner has produced a book as authoritative and entertaining as his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Beautiful Swimmers: Watermen, Crabs, and the Chesapeake Bay* (1976). Warner went to sea aboard the ships of five different nations, finding distinctive styles of work on each. The Russians stay at sea for long stretches (up to five months), but good food, women crew members, and periodic pep rallies stave off boredom. The Spaniards, superstitious to a fault, never use the words "fox," "snake," or "priest" (and the author discovered he was one crew's lucky talisman). West Germans are the most successful distant-water fishermen, but the superlative means little: Innovations in technology have made the fleets of all nations perhaps too successful. Sophisticated fish-hunting scanners, 500-ton capacity nets, and automated factory trawlers have helped deplete the schools of cod, capelin, and pollock. Yields have not grown since 1974, despite a stronger worldwide fishing effort. The large fishing fleets may soon find their own ranks being thinned.

*Arts & Letters***THE ICON**

edited by Kurt Weitzmann,
 Gaiane Alibegasvili, Aneli
 Volskaja, et al.
 Knopf, 1982
 419 pp. \$60

With this volume, edited by a multinational team of scholars, the icon may be said to have completed its long passage from the monastery to the museum to the coffee table. One of the most varied and well-produced anthologies of holy pictures of the Christian East ever assembled in one book, it provides examples of icons from the early models in 10th-century Constantinople to the more abstract forms in 16th- and 17th-century Russia. It also includes a particularly rich array from lesser-known collections in Greece, Georgia, and Serbia. But something has been lost in the process of artistic recovery: quite simply, a clear sense of what icons were all about in the first place. As integral parts of the devotional life of Orthodox Christianity, icons