

The Man I Lost

Betsy Lizotte

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In another time, I had a man whom I adored. At first, there was no fighting only love. During those times of love, I remember how he would gently push my shoulder to get me up even before the sun got up. Our conversation would be like this:

“Good morning, Honey, let’s go fishing!” He whispered because it was so early.

“Really? Now?” I would say, my voice thick with sleep. But then I would smile because his excitement and childlike glee were infectious.

“No better time,” he would reply. “This is when the fish bite. They’re just starting to look for their breakfast.”

“What about our breakfast?”

“How about some Double D?” he would say in an excited whisper. “But we gotta go quick.”

“Donuts?” I whisper-squealed with delight. I put my arms around his thick neck and kissed him. He was handsome and smelled like the sea. Then he helped me out of bed. He even helped me put on my clothes.

Standing on the huge rocks of the jetty, our lines would be in the water as the sun rose. I can still smell the salty air coming off the ocean. He would probably hold the reel in one hand and a coffee cruller in the other. He had very muscular arms, like Popeye. I’m not kidding! He was so sweet to me, I felt like his very own Olive Oyl. He would put the sea worms with all the

squirring legs on my hook so I wouldn't have to feel their sliminess or feel guilty about killing them. He would cast the reel for me, holding it out behind him with his strong thumb on the line, only releasing it as the pole came over his shoulder and then parallel with the blue-green Atlantic. He would hand me the pole and I would hold it with two hands. Shortly I would feel a satisfying tug on the line. I would hope that the tug was a signal that a fish had taken the bait and not a big clump of seaweed. When I would land a scup, all silvery scales and mouth opening and closing as it "drowned" in our air, he would hold it and take it off the hook, then put it mercifully in the bucket of salt water so I wouldn't have to cause it pain or get that fishy smell on my hands. During that time he loved me as much as he loved the sea.

Then slowly I lost him.

Excerpt – Full version pending publication