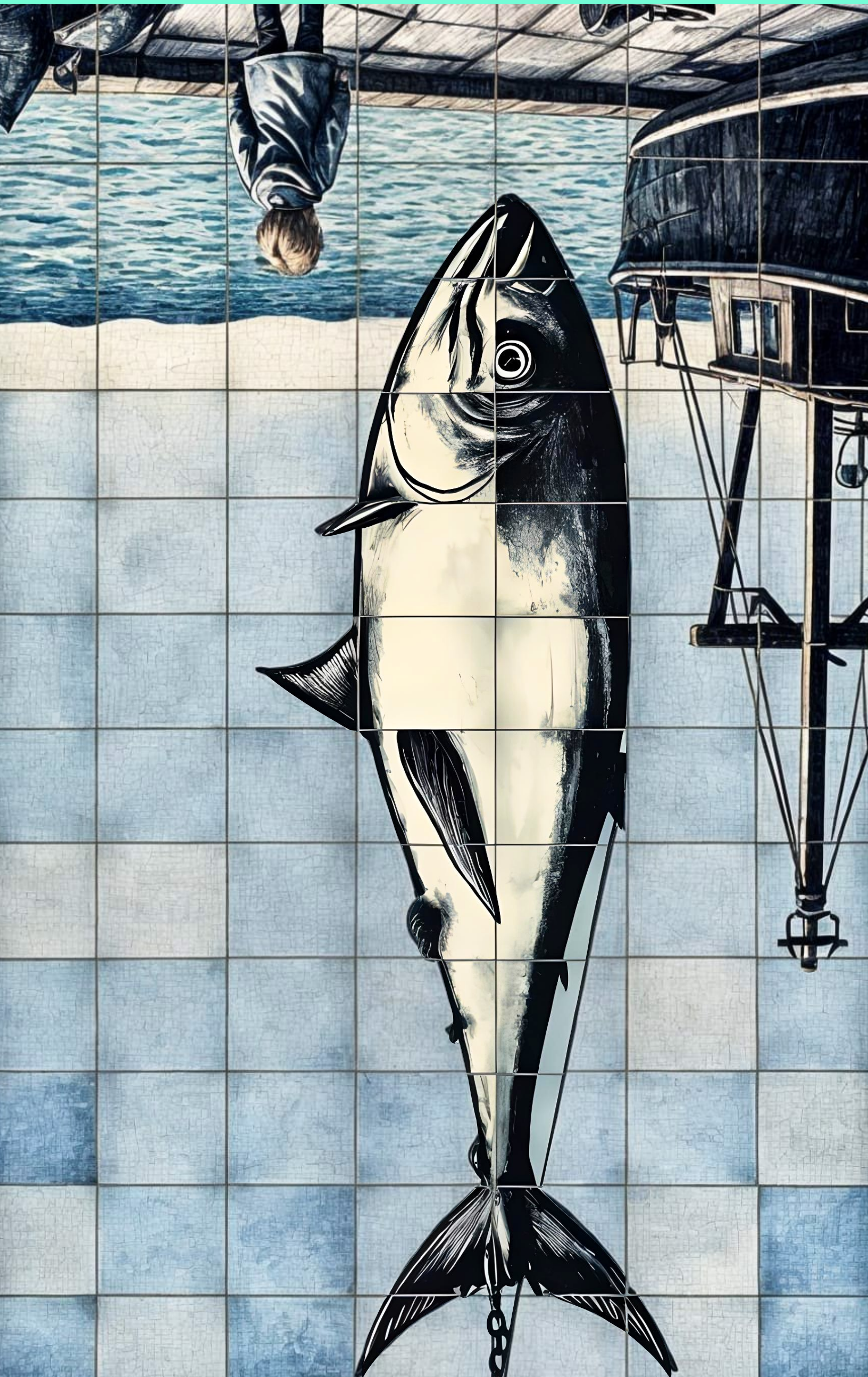


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## Edinburgh

Joel Bush

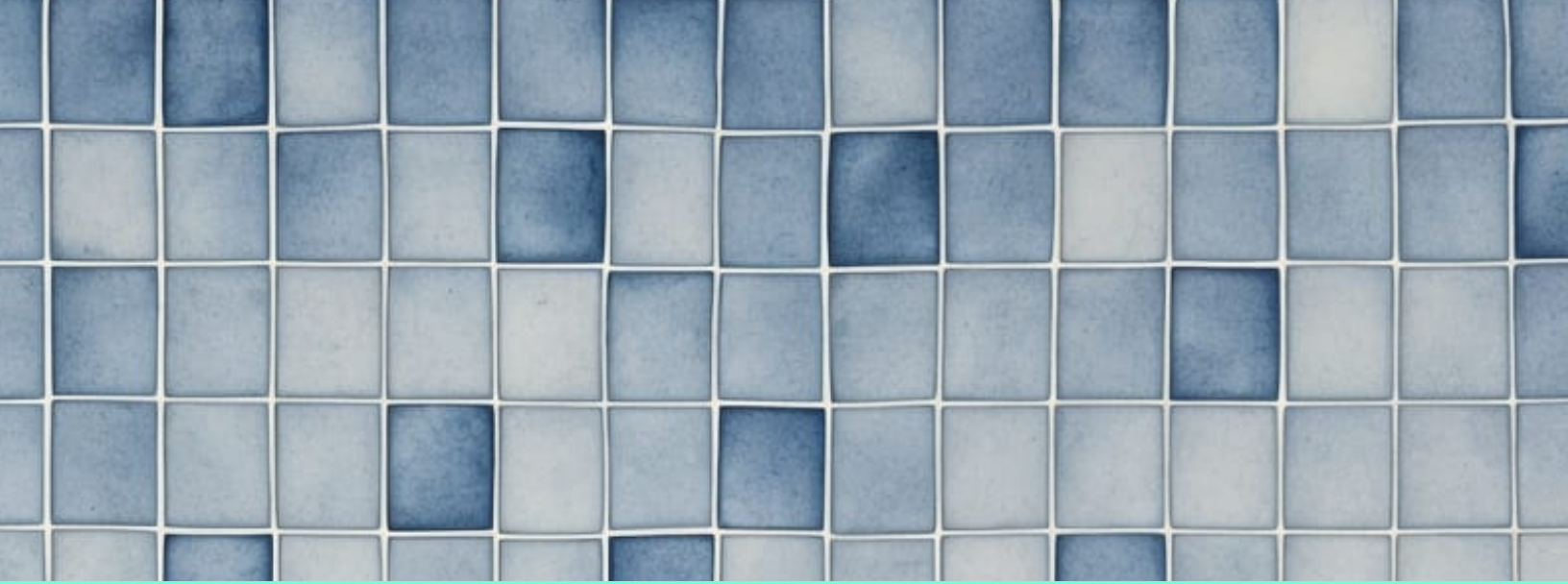
It's a damp city—  
full of rust and mold.  
The towers contend  
with the hills to  
reach the cloudy sky.  
The brick sidewalks form  
dark, treacherous slopes.  
The shops are little  
havens for brewing and brooding.  
Seabirds circle,  
plotting dives  
for crumbs or carrion.  
The strum  
of strings and a voice wailing,  
mourning some  
shattered dream.

## Fair-Weather Friend

Joel Bush

The hammock is swept up  
by the cold wind,  
frigid and indignant.  
Its red and yellow stripes  
beg for balmier days.  
But the chains  
that hold it to  
the trees  
jingle in mockery.





## The Graying Sky

Rae Greenwood

The morning sun touches the ground  
As if softly caressing a flower.  
A warm glow encompasses all life  
Painting everything in a loving yellow hue.

Yet, slowly and unnoticed, a gray spot emerges  
A small speck that is simply ignored  
The sun's loving embrace overpowers it.

Time passes, another gray spot appears  
Followed by another, and another, and yet another  
Until a plethora of gray is all that can be seen

Obscuring the sun's warm sight and comfort  
Leaving only a confusing and cold gray landscape.





## In Tennis, Love Means Nothing

Isaac Richards

There are two types of tennis, love:  
sunbaked clay, green-groomed grass,  
a California country club—or  
shoveling snow off the courts in March.

Wimbledon-white shoes, gold  
Luxilon strings, seeded circuit,  
pay-to-play, Daddy Warbucks bracket—or  
stiff, thread-bare balls and fraying nets.

When we played cold tennis, in North Idaho,  
which were we playing? It's clear, now  
that we're married, but in the moment, love  
made me, in wristbands, feel famous.

That eleven-year-old with glasses,  
watching slow-motion Federer forehands  
on YouTube all winter long... forget  
a sixteen-court complex or ball machine.

No gold-star academy disciplined dream  
could beat a bus ride south to Boise,  
red-hot bathroom tears, broken strings,  
Hawk-Eye pinpointing your place: out.

Just the wind, firm enough to float a short lob  
backwards—back over the net—reversing  
misfortune. What might have been, love?  
What was both fiercer and fonder in memory.

# Pilchards and Honey

Lewis Woolston

Elizabeth Shaw finished high school the same year that Kevin Rudd became Prime Minister. Both events were anti-climactic and disappointing in their own ways.

Port Lincoln High School held a small ceremony for her class and a very tame party afterwards. Then, without further fuss, the young graduates went off to start their adult lives. A small group went off to Adelaide for University, a few started apprenticeships, a few more inherited positions in the family farm or business. Elizabeth and many others began their careers as wage slaves without enthusiasm or a firm direction.

She had already been working weekends and after school at a local bakery café, the owner asked her if she wanted to be full time now and for lack of better options she said yes.

That first summer of adult life was great and Elizabeth carried it in her memory afterwards like a golden age. She worked at the bakery and every day off was spent at the beach with her friends. There was a boy from high school she fooled around with for a while, then another one on holiday from Adelaide, neither were serious but both were fun and it was glorious to be young and alive for a while.

As the winter returned and the holiday people left the town and her life seemed to shrink and become impoverished before her eyes. Work became a drudge and a poorly paid one at that. The limitless possibilities of life after high school that she'd felt only a few months ago now seemed pipe dreams. A future of wage slavery and struggling to make ends meet stretched out before her in horrifying immensity.

She'd moved out of her parent's house in the summer to share a place with two other girls the same age. During that first summer it had been glorious fun, like an extended sleepover with the ability to drink and experience sexual life unhurried and unhidden for the first time. As the winter and the reality of adult life settled in it lost its shine a little. Living on beans and toast over winter and having to go to work in the rain and cold made Elizabeth question her choices.

Aside from the two girls she was sharing a house with it was amazing to Elizabeth how quickly she lost contact with the rest of the class of 2007 she'd graduated with less than a year ago. She'd see people around town but they had their own lives now. She began to realise that aside from being stuck in the same institution for eight hours a day five days a week for 12 years she had nothing really in common with any of her former classmates. By the time a full year had elapsed from her graduation those people were memories and not much else.

After a full year had passed she decided to leave the Bakery job and go work at the Pier Hotel. Pub work paid slightly better and she was tired of the Bakery anyway.

She began to meet more people via the front bar and her social circle expanded a little. She felt a little more adult now and the girl who'd left high school just over a year ago seemed a stranger from a lifetime ago.

She met Tony when she was working in the front bar. He came in regular with the rest of his boat's crew after a fishing trip. He was obviously the man in charge judging by the way the rest of the men deferred to him and the way he kept a sober head while the others got pissed quickly.

Elizabeth was fascinated by him and watched him intently. He was muscled and lean, a life of hard work on fishing boats had burned all fat off his body, slightly Mediterranean looking and she was unable to guess his age with any certainty. She realised she was falling in love, or at least in lust, with him from across the bar.

Their first conversation happened because he was in the carpark making a phone call when she had knocked off and was about to go home. They spotted each other as Elizabeth was going to her car, he hurriedly finished his phone call and went to talk to her.

‘Hey, it’s Elizabeth isn’t it? What’s happening? Where’re you going?’

‘I’m going home, just finished work.’

He didn’t miss a stride but made his play with confidence.

‘Do you want to hang out sometime? Maybe go to the beach together or something? I go down Fisheries Bay for a surf sometimes if you want to join me.’

Elizabeth was pleased and flattered by his attention and obvious desire. She liked the idea that he was keen on her and willing to risk rejection for her.

‘Ok, sounds good, you want to swap numbers?’

They swapped phone numbers and she was surprised when he told her his surname.

‘Capilano? Really?’

‘Yeah, same name as the honey but no relation.’

She smiled at that line, it seemed such a simple yet joyful thing to say and she felt a warm glow of happiness at the idea of spending more time with this man.

He messaged her first only a few days later asking if she wanted to come with him to Fisheries Bay for a swim and a surf. She had the day off so she said yes without hesitation.

He pulled up in his Troopy outside her house and she clambered aboard the great beast of a vehicle with a smile. He drove casually and chatted with her along the way. They told each other about their lives up to that point. She was pleased to discover he was only five years older than her, that made it feel more legitimate and less weird in her eyes. His family had been involved in Port Lincoln’s fishing industry since they got off the boat from Italy in the 1950’s. Working on boats was all he knew and he was satisfied with that life.

His parents had sent him to Saint Joseph’s, the local Catholic School, hence why Elizabeth didn’t remember him from school, he wasn’t really the church going type and neither were his parents but it was one of those Italian family traditions nobody questioned or thought to deviate from. He’d left school early and gone straight to working on boats. Crayfishing boats, Scallop boats and Prawn trawlers, he’d done them all, knew everyone in the local fishing industry and had the respect of them all.

Elizabeth told him what little there was to tell about her life. He seemed to genuinely interested in her and she began to feel somewhat flattered by his attention. The road to Fisheries Bay drifted past in happy sunshine and they both quietly wondered if they were falling in love.



They got to the beach and began to surf the moderate swell. Elizabeth had a little experience surfing but was no expert, Tony helped her and gave her gentle advice. They day passed in a bliss of salt, sun and healthy exercise. They got more comfortable with each other and began to find excuses to touch each other, reasons to be close to each other, they found themselves looking intently at each other for minutes at a time. There was a spark.

In the afternoon, when they had almost exhausted themselves, they sat on the beach together and looked at the waves rolling in. Elizabeth was about to take the risk of leaning on Tony's shoulder to see how he responded when he jumped up suddenly.

'Look! Out there! Shark!'

The urgency in his voice made her stand up quickly and look where he was pointing.

'About a hundred metres out, big Bronze Whaler by the shape of him. Fuck he's probably been in the area the whole time we've been here.'

Elizabeth looked and could just make out a dark shape moving through the swell. She couldn't have sworn to it but it did look like a shark. It moved in no great hurry in a rough line across the bay presumably following some unseen sandbank or reef, an unchallenged master of the sea.

'If it's been in the area the whole time we've been here why didn't we see it? How come it didn't attack us?'

Tony shook his head gently and reassured her.

'There's always sharks in the water, most of the time you just don't see them, they're not actually that interested in people anyway, they prefer fish, lot of Salmon and Mulloway in this area so he's probably focused on them. We're not a priority.'

Almost without realising it Elizabeth had moved closer to him, she carefully moved her hand towards his and without a word needing to be spoken they held hands and kissed for the first time. It was done. They were a couple now.

Things moved fast after that. They spent all their spare time together. Sometimes Tony stayed overnight at her place, the sight of his half naked body coming out of the shower in the morning caused her housemates to giggle and sigh with equal parts amusement and jealousy. Sometimes Elizabeth stayed overnight at his place and was made to feel like a queen when he cooked her breakfast in the morning.

Eventually she moved in with him. She overheard him on the phone one day talking to one of the blokes from the boat and he said he would have to "ask the missus first" before he decided on something. She felt a warm glow of loving ownership at the thought of being "the

missus” to him, it felt like she belonged, was needed, was a permanent centre of his life. It felt good.

She was careless and forgetful about her birth control and inevitably one slipped past the goalie. She was pregnant. She had a moment of terror but his smile when she told him made everything all right. They got married, her new in-laws were sceptical about her but loved their son too much to ruin things, the ceremony was simple but the reception was a big affair with a lot of relations coming out of the woodwork.

Afterwards they went home and Tony began to help her out of her dress with gentle impatience. He got her naked and held her close.

‘Come here Mrs Capilano.’ He grinned.

‘Same name as the honey but no relation.’ She smiled back and melted into his arms.

She got too big to work at the pub and quit. She eventually gave birth to a little girl at the Port Lincoln Hospital on a Monday afternoon while Tony was away, working on a trawler. Tony got back the day



after by which time Elizabeth had already decided to name the child Valerie. Both sets of grandparents were overjoyed and used every opportunity to spoil the child.

Their life slipped into domesticity and routine centred around their daughter. Appointments with the doctor, small daily excursions to the playground and the mother’s group filled her life. Tony continued to work on the boats but now he started to chase the bigger money. He began to work on the long-liners and the Tuna boats doing longer trips. Elizabeth learnt to be self-reliant for the most part occasionally asking her parents or Tony’s parents for help when he was away.

Elizabeth was fully committed to their marriage. Tony had become a need to her, something almost physical the absence of which caused withdrawal cravings. There was no question in her mind of looking elsewhere or leaving. She craved him when he was away at

sea, often keeping Valerie in bed with her as a poor substitute for his warm body, when he came home she would patiently wait for him to shower off the stench of Pilchards and sweat before launching herself at him like a Tigress in heat.

There was a storm one time, a big one, big enough for the local ABC Radio to broadcast emergency warnings about it. Every fishing industry wife in Port Lincoln was terrified. They all knew what it might mean for their men on the boats.

She managed to get Valerie to sleep while she sat up with the radio and listened to the warnings and news as it came in. Eventually she got a text message from Tony. They'd got back to Port okay but were soaked to the bone, cold and exhausted could she please run him a hot bath and he'd be home soon?

She felt relief flood through her body. She texted back her assent and began to run the bath. She poured in the silly strawberry smelling bubble bath she'd got months ago and barely used since. She got the water as hot as it was possible to get knowing that he'd be a solid half hour before he got home. She checked on Valerie who was sleeping through the storm as though it was nothing before she got undressed and got in the almost scalding water herself. She was settling in when Tony got home.

'Hey baby, Jesus we had a rough one this trip, biggest waves I've seen in years, thought we were fucked for a bit there. Is Valerie asleep? I've been looking forward to this bath for hours.'

She stood up, strawberry scented bubbles inadequately covering her naked body, she motioned for him to be quiet and get undressed. He did as he was bid and she took his hand, leading him into the bath with her. She sat him down in front of her and began to rub his muscular back.

He surrendered to her care and the fear and cold of the last day melted away from him under the loving ministrations of his young wife.

That night they conceived another child. It turned out to be another girl, they named her Julia.

The years of being a young mother seemed a dream to her later in life. They passed by so fast yet seemed to go on forever. Her two girls, her husband and her parents and in-laws were almost the entirety of her life, the wider world meant very little to her at the time, political turmoil in Canberra, wars in the Middle East and tensions with China, none of it was even noticed by her at the time.

Eventually Valerie was old enough to start school. They, or rather Tony and his family, decided to send her to St Joseph's, the local Catholic School which Tony had himself attended. They took the

obligatory photos of Valerie in her school uniform on her first day and walked her to the gate full of hope.

For a moment Elizabeth was overwhelmed at the thought of it all. Just on a decade after her own final day at school she was sending her daughter for her first day. Life went on regardless of what you did, she thought, one day come after another and before you knew it your life was done. For a second the sense that she'd done very little with her life so far gave her a sense of crushing sadness. What was she but a fisherman's wife?

She thought of the other kids she'd graduated with back in 2007 and what they were doing with their lives. Some were still living local but she didn't see them much, the occasional hello when she bumped into them at the supermarket and that was it. Others had gone to Adelaide for University or just to try their luck. None, as far as she knew, had done anything significant. There were no astronauts, rock stars or future Prime Ministers in the Port Lincoln High School class of 2007. If there were any achievers amongst them they were quiet achievers, very quiet indeed.

She pulled herself out of the depressive train of thought by thinking of what Valerie might become in her life. Surely sending her to a private school would reap benefits? She might amount to something in her life and Elizabeth would have that as a consolation and justification of her life.

The thought pleased her and filled a hole inside her that had opened up and threatened to swallow her. She sat at home nursing a cup of tea while Julia had a nap and Tony went to see about repairs to the boat feeling as much contentment as she was likely to feel.

The disaster, when it came, was almost complete and overthrew what little happiness she'd been able to sequester for herself up to that point.

Tony was working on a sein trawler out in the Bight trawling for Pilchards again. They were shorthanded and he had to fill in and do two men's jobs. His foot got tangled in the net when it was dropped off the back. The weighted bottom of the net took him down a solid forty metres underwater before anyone could stop it. By the time they got the net back up he had already drowned, his furious struggle to free himself from the net had been futile and the last thing he saw in this world was the sun through the water and the underside of the boat as the saltwater filled his lungs and killed him.

His body was wrapped up in a tarp and put on the ice normally reserved for the catch. They brought him back to Port Lincoln and the ambulance and police were waiting on the dockside ready to go through the formalities required for a death at sea.

Elizabeth was informed of her widowhood by a Police Sergeant with grey hair and a thin moustache. She cried without shame in front of him before getting herself together and thinking about what she was going to do with her daughters. Years later she would recall those few moments of utter terror thinking about what was going to happen to her and the girls as the scariest moments of her life.

Her parents and in-laws rallied around her. She was able to see Tony's body in the morgue and touch him one last time. For some unknown reason, possibly a reaction to grief, as she stood there looking at



him she thought of the first time they'd fucked all those years ago. She remembered the feeling of him penetrating her for the first time vividly. She broke out in awkward giggles which she tried to stifle and she began to cry and laugh at the same time. The nice doctor in charge of the morgue told her it was alright, grief did funny things to a person and it was okay for her to let it all out, he'd wait for her if she wanted. She managed to get a grip on herself eventually and was able to sign the forms she needed to sign. The nice doctor reassured her again before she left.

'Cry if you need to cry, laugh, scream, do whatever you need to do. Grief needs to be felt and dealt with or you can't move on. I've seen it all before.'

She went home without crying any more.

The girls handled the news that their father was dead relatively well. Elizabeth was worried that they would be permanently damaged by it but they seemed to be okay after a bit of a cry. Perhaps they were young enough that it would bounce off them. The funeral was awful, relatives she barely remembered popping up out of the woodwork, dramatic displays of public emotion and two little girls who wanted to go home already.

Life settled down again after the disruption but there was a massive vacuum in their lives without Tony. His parents said they'd pay for

the girl's schooling so that was one thing less to worry about. She got the insurance payout and that helped but it became obvious that she would have to go back to work soon enough. Julia started school as well and she made arrangements for the grandparents to pick the girls up on alternate days while she went to work.

She got a job at the Port Lincoln Hotel doing the lunch and afternoon shifts in their restaurant. The familiar rhythm of hospitality work helped her focus on the here and now rather than pining for the dead.

When she wasn't working she focused her life and attention on the girls. They were doing well at school and they appeared to have a future ahead of them. The loss of their father would no doubt be felt for years to come but it seemed like they would be more or less okay in the long run.

Occasionally something would come up that would bring their pain into sharp relief again. One day Valerie saw a photo of her father on an old trophy wall at school. Tony had been a footy star for Saint Joseph's back in the day and there was still a photo of him on a wall in the gym. Valerie looked at it for ages until a teacher saw her.

'Looking at your Dad Valerie?'

'Yeah, I never saw this picture up here before, how old is this Mr Beasley?'

'Ancient, it was my first or second year here I think. He was a gun footy player in those days, good boy all round but handy in the ruck and up forward.'

Valerie digested this information silently and left without speaking any further of it. Afterwards she looked at the picture every time she went past it into the gym for PE class.

A few years after Tony died Elizabeth began to feel something for another man.

His name was Soren and he was a Danish backpacker working temporarily at the Port Lincoln Hotel.

He was blonde and handsome and funny and he made Elizabeth feel young, alive and desired again.

He told her stories about his travels. He'd been all over Asia and Europe and after his time in Australia he wanted to go to South America. Elizabeth loved hearing about it. The places she'd never been, the life she'd never had and the world outside Port Lincoln she only vaguely knew of.

He invited Elizabeth and the girls to go swimming with him. The girls loved him because he was warm and funny, the same qualities Elizabeth was attracted to. But he was more than a fun time to Elizabeth, he was an escape, the possibility of another life, or at least the vicarious living of a more exciting life than she had ever known.

She invited him over more and more and he began to stay overnight joining her in her bed once the girls had been put to sleep. He'd tell her stories about backpacking around Cambodia or motorcycling across Romania and she would lap it up like an exotic, narcotic dream. In the morning he would slip out before the girls woke up and she would be left to get them ready for school like an ordinary mother enslaved to the drudgery, as if his stories didn't or couldn't apply to her personally.

Eventually the day came when she noticed he wasn't there anymore. She realised she hadn't seen him at work for a few days, she called him and an electronic voice said that the number was disconnected or out of range. She knew on some level what had happened but felt the need to confirm it to herself.

'Hey Carol, have you seen Soren lately?'

'Oh he's moved on, he gave notice and left, continuing with his travels I suppose, you know how it is with backpackers.'

It took every ounce of self-control Elizabeth had to not show her hurt and rage. She continued with her work and when she got a spare minute she went into the staff toilets and cried for a few minutes.

The weeks after were a blur of numbness to her. She felt stupid, Soren hadn't loved her, she'd been an amusing diversion for him on his travels but nothing more. The little candle she'd burned for him had been entirely in vain. Perhaps he might remember the woman he fucked in Australia years from now but maybe not, he probably fucked a lot of women on his travels. She saw him now for what he was, a Peter Pan, a boy going on adventures around the world never settling down and never committing, he never had any intention of developing their relationship into something more serious.

Perhaps, she thought, he was the smart one, perhaps the only reason she was angry with him was because she wished she could be as free as he was. No kids, no dead husband, no being tied down to a small town.

She stewed on this for weeks, the hurt raw and real, until she realised she was late. Knowing in her gut already what the result was going to be she got a pregnancy test from the supermarket, sure enough, she was pregnant. She realised she had no way of letting Soren know, he'd obviously ditched the cheap phone he'd got for his time in Australia, she had never got his email and he'd always said that social media was a waste of time that he didn't want to bother.

She was left, quite literally, holding the baby.

She sat on the back step of her house one afternoon cup of tea in hand pondering her life when Valerie came and sat next to her.

'Mum what's wrong?'

‘Nothing’s wrong sweetheart.’

‘Yes there is, you’re acting differently, something’s wrong.’

Elizabeth sighed, there was no keeping secrets from this kid.

‘I’m going to have a baby.’

‘From Soren?’

‘Yes, from Soren.’

‘But he’s gone isn’t he? He went to South America.’

‘Yep, and the bastard didn’t say goodbye and never gave me his email or anything, I have no way of contacting him to let him know.’

Valerie sat quietly for a few moments and absorbed this information before speaking again.

‘So what are you going to do?’

‘I guess I’m going to have a baby and you’re going to have a little brother or sister.’

Now that she had said it out loud the future became more solid to Elizabeth. She would have this baby, she was squeamish about the idea of abortion although supporting it in theory and anyway, there wasn’t anywhere in Port Lincoln to get one done so that left only the one option. Her life would be spent raising her children and she would never leave this town.

‘That wasn’t right Mum, what Soren did to you wasn’t right.’ Valerie spoke and broke her gloomy musing.

Warmed by the support of her daughter she held her close and spoke gently.

‘Men are like that sweetheart, even the good ones aren’t that good. Make sure you’re smart and don’t get yourself tied down to a man okay? Be a bit smarter than your old Mum.’

She held her daughter close and watched the sun slowly setting over the tin roofs of the houses around them in the town she would never leave. She wondered about the baby she was going to have, would it be a boy or girl? Would it be tall and blonde like Soren or more like her? She hoped for the future of her kids, she hoped and would have prayed if she believed in God that they might have more of a life than her. That they might escape.

She finished her cup of tea and found that there was moisture on her eyes. She got up and pulled her daughter with her.

‘C’mon sweetie, let’s get dinner happening, but just you promise me, you’ll be smarter than your Mum okay?’

‘Okay Mum, I promise.’

They went inside and got on with life.





## 11:11

Emma Grey Rose

an endless / sleep / under the clouds in the field out / back / there / is where  
the moon / shines / there / is where the wish flowers / go bald / during /  
wishing / white petals / vanish / those wishes suffer / long drawn-out /  
deaths



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