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Fishing

Antonio D. Giordano
Gettysburg College

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Fishing

Author Bio

Antonio Giordano is a senior English with Writing Concentration and Political Science double major at Gettysburg College. He is from Southborough, Massachusetts. When he is not writing, you can find Antonio coaching for the Esports club, spending time with his fraternity Brothers in Alpha Chi Rho, or building forts in the woods of his childhood home.

Fishing

ANTONIO D. GIORDANO

A fin flashed to my left and a Fish half my size poked its head from the ocean. Its beautiful scales caught the sun and bounced into my eyes.

“Help!” it yelled through gargles of water. Without a second thought I stabbed the Fish through the back, just below its dorsal fin, and hoisted it onto the wooden raft. It flopped for a moment, thumping against the floor. I stared as it shook and waited for it to speak again. Blood poured from its wound and soaked my raft. I grabbed my makeshift oar and raised it above my head.

“Wait!” it cried as I brought the oar down onto its head. I stumbled back and let out a cry. I grabbed my throat, passing over my shaggy beard, it was a sound I had not heard in what felt like forever. “You prick!” the Fish cried. “You stabbed me!”

“You’re a fucking fish?”

“And you’re a dick, you hit me!” The Fish continued to flop around, splattering blood across the planks. “You going to just stand there? Pull it out!”

I shuffled over, grabbing hold of the spear and putting a foot on the Fish. It squirmed as I struggled to pull it from the scales. In a spray of red and a fleshy squelch, the spear came loose.

“Thanks, I guess,” the Fish said. I stared at the Fish in bewilderment as it spoke. “The water, it’s suffocating.”

“You’re a fish.”

“You’re a man, so? Stop staring, you’re making me uncomfortable.”

I turned away and looked out to the sea. The vast blue reached out beyond the horizon; the sun shimmered off of its surface in every direction. The sky was a pure blue, featureless expanse that seemed to stretch forever.

“You’re far out,” said the Fish.

“I am.”

“How long?”

“I don’t know.”

“Months?”

“Could be.”

“Years?”

“Feels like it.”

“What did she look like?”

“I can’t remember.” I sat and continued to paddle. The Fish flopped a bit closer to me, placing its fin on my knee. I paused for a moment. “Jet-black hair. Curls. Every time I walked into a room I could smell her perfume, even if she had never been there...” I looked down at the Fish and realized what it was doing. I picked up the oar and stood over it. “Fucker.” I croaked out before bringing the paddle down on its head. I beat at it; with each crunch a new bit of bone or blood would shoot out onto the deck of the raft. I continued until its head was caved in and its brain oozed out of its contorted skull.

The body began to stink and I tried to push it toward the sea. Just as I got it to the end of the raft a pair of pink webbed feet perched on the heap of flesh. A bright white Bird sat on the Fish, its orange beak clicking softly as our eyes locked.

“You going to eat that?” the Bird said.

“You going to eat that?” I mocked, exaggerating a squawk. “Go crazy.”

The Bird tore into the Fish’s flesh, throwing back its head to engulf each chunk in one gulp. I turned my back to the bird and continued to paddle, my eyes scanning the sea for any sign of motion. I heard the sounds of the gruesome tearing stop and then the soft plops of feet on wood. I looked to my side and the Bird waddled up next to me. It stared up into my eyes. I turned back to the sea.

“My wife drowned,” it barked.

I slowly turned my head to the bird.

“Dragged out during a storm yesterday.”

“It’s been clear for days.”

“Doesn’t make it any less true.” The Bird glared at me and fluttered its wings. I mock swung the paddle at the Bird and it jumped to the edge of the raft. The Bird tilted its head and let out a squeak. “What are you looking for? I’m looking for my wife.”

“Nothing, nothing important.”

“Something to keep your mind off her?”

I ignored the Bird and paddled in silence. The sun began to set on

the horizon, going lower and lower until I could barely make out the features of the waves.

"She'll be harder to find." The Bird finally spoke again. "With the dark and all that." Again, I ignored the Bird. "Did she ever talk much? Mine talked all the time, couldn't get her to shut up."

I chuckled, laying the paddle down by my side. "Yeah. Didn't like the quiet."

"Neither do I." We sat in silence for a moment. The only noise was the quiet slosh of the water coming up onto the raft. "Why'd she go?"

"She didn't, I did, and it wasn't my choice." I spoke. The Bird looked at me and cocked its head to the side. "Just, got separated. You can't always pick when it'll happen, it just does. Some things are out of our hands."

"Wings." The Bird said, flapping his wings in front of my face.

"Yeah, wings." I stared out at the sea. "We'd sit for hours. Talking. I can remember every little word."

"So, why'd you let her go?" the Bird asked. I turned to look at the Bird. All I could see was its dark silhouette. I stood, gripping the oar as tight as I could. I reared it back, then loosened my grip. I dropped it and let out a sigh.

"I don't know. Not our time?"

"Is it ever?"

I laid down next to the bird, my arms stretched behind my head. I began to laugh.

"What?" the Bird asked.

"I didn't even hold her hand."

"Your wife?"

"Not even close, bud, not even close."