

Tomi Shaw

Thunder Boating

When the rain was a drizzle, Lida would putter around camp, cooking or sharpening knives. They'd go boating in the spring because of the promise of storms. It was the lightning. And when the clouds rolled menacing over the dreary March sun, when the thunder and electricity hung in the air, she'd hustle Kev to the water's edge and follow him on board; her pack stuffed with rope and those sharp knives. He'd fire the engine and they'd push off the dock, idle through the no-wake zone and hit cruising speed to pop the little cabin cruiser in and out of the waves, capping white and hissing. When nature's sizzle started, Lida'd empty the pack and Kev would drop anchor. He'd take one of the knives and slice through her clothes, then tie her hands behind her back. She'd crawl to her hands and knees and he'd slide another length of rope through her mouth and hold it while he rode her to the rhythm of the waves under the strobe of lightning. And it never took them very long because by the time it all started they were so hyped for it, fifteen to twenty minutes was all they lasted.

So that last time when a rogue wave capsized the boat, it was a foregone conclusion that Lida was going to drown what with her hands tied behind her back.

The next day when they hauled Lida out of the water Kev refused to look upon her dead body, and that just didn't play well with the authorities. Kev sat on the dock and answered the questions "yes, he tried to find her, had her foot at one point and then was turned upside down and she was ripped away" but his gaze was lost, locked upon his insides replaying the look on her face with the rope pulled between her teeth, the strobe flashing blue black blue and no one believed him. He told them everything, about the ham she fried, the potatoes wrapped in aluminum foil, and the asparagus. About the swing in the hammock, the frolic on the picnic table, about waiting on a big storm. They shook their heads. Found bottles and baggie "Yes, we drank, she liked it best buzzing" and again his gaze went internal and he saw her ass, round and soft, the long flow of her back, the line of her spine. He felt himself harden. They put him in handcuffs to walk him up the bank, past their campsite.

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Everything smelled new, brand spanking new, like spring. The rain was a drizzle.