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The Pier

A taunt line draws me back and back again, as if I am both standing on the pier and swimming free in the foam below.

In the distance, the shore, broad and beckoning.

The overhead sun beats down, burning all, blinding all.

I hold the slipping rod in my hands.

I cast again.

The metal pellet pulls the line down, down.

An errant pelican, its sagging pouch swinging, approaches.

Part threatening, part curious.

Yet my feet are rooted on the splintery timbers, the salty breeze embracing me, encircling me, enveloping me.

Brighton Beach

The salty waves.

The omnipresent sun.

The crashing surf.

Sounds of laughter. Shrieks.

The force of the water propelled us against each other and I felt the stiff,

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abrasive fabric of her dark iridescent bathing suit.

We held hands as I bobbed.

We were alone.

I wondered if the waves would steal us, remove us and disperse us, never to be found again.

I found comfort in the crowds, the masses surrounding us.

A wave. Taller than I.

I leapt.

My eyes stung.

Yet, when I opened them, she was still there.

She seemed to smile.

I put my feet on her doughy thighs, then quickly removed them.

We did not do such things.

We kept distances. Even in the anonymity of the ocean.

She gazed out at the incoming tide, molten under the hot sun.

Around her, an aura, unseen.

I stood back.

Fearful, that if I asked, she would tell me.

What she had seen.

Alone, alone with her in the surf, alone in a world of revelers, wet, joyous, stunned by the enormity, the dynamic of the roiling surf, the sun reflecting off the sparkling, rough threads of her costume, I saw my mother.