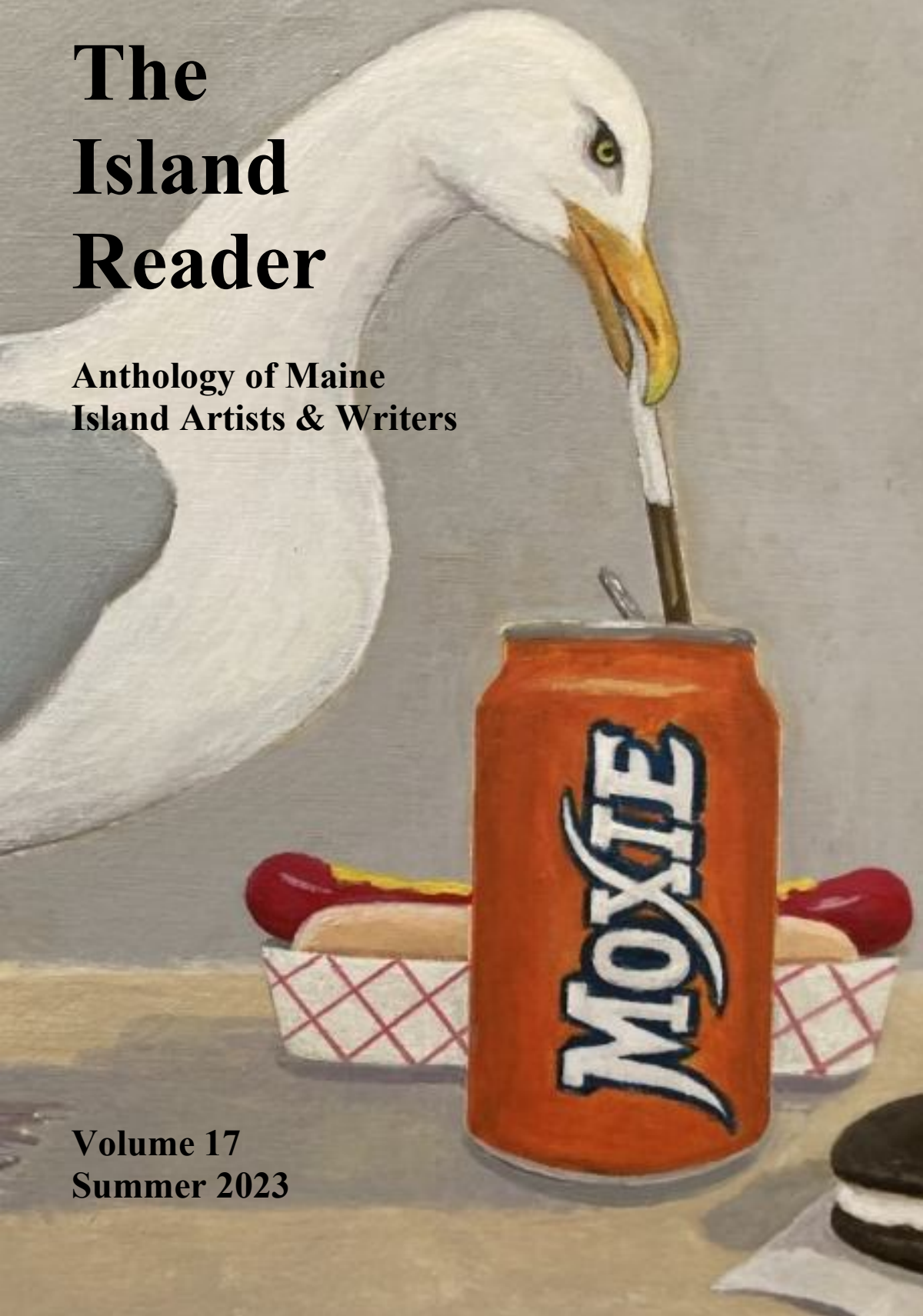


The Island Reader

Anthology of Maine
Island Artists & Writers

Volume 17
Summer 2023



A photograph of a field of wildflowers. In the foreground, several tall, slender stems of lupines are in focus, bearing dense racemes of small flowers in shades of pink, magenta, and blue. Interspersed among the lupines are several white daisies with bright yellow centers. Some yellow wildflowers are also visible. The background is a soft-focus view of grey, rocky terrain. The overall scene is bright and colorful, suggesting a sunny day in a natural setting.

The Island Reader

Our Island Families Edition

Summer 2023

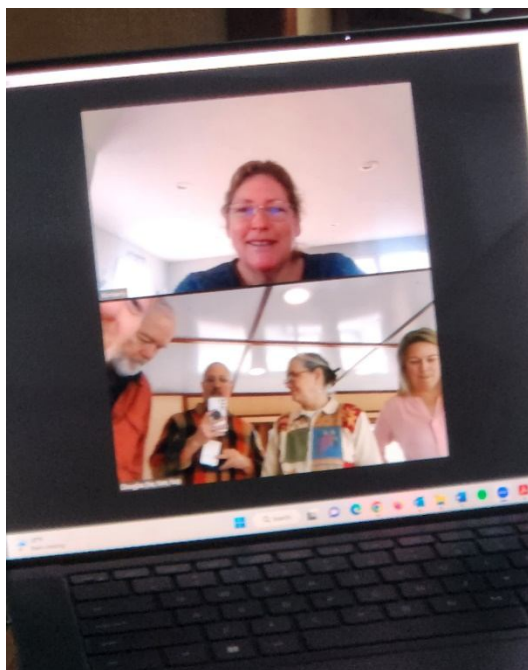
Cover image by
Tom Kilmartin
Peaks Island

Title page image by
Jennifer McKibben
Matinicus

Copyright © 2023

Editorial Board

Kendra Chubbuck, Isle au Haut
Douglas Cornman, Mount Desert Island
Ingrid Gaither, Great Cranberry
M. T. (Toby) Martin, Jr., Islesboro
Kimberly Peabody, Matinicus
Gary Rainford, Swan's Island



(Photo credit, Gary Rainford)

Table of Contents

Mike Johnson / vi
Arria Carbonneau / 9
Danielle Madore / 9
Holland Carroll / 10
Luther Beal / 11,12
Jeanne Hutchins / 12, 13
Judith Bowen Horky / 14
Melanie Sanborn / 20
Donna Seymour / 21
Susan Sidwell / 21, 75
Leona Buswell / 22
Laurie Farley / 23
Nathaniel Krekel / 24, 25
Dorian Edwin / 25
Weston Parker / 26
Audrey Barter / 28
Janet Moynihan / 29
Rachel Deschamps / 30
Katie Urich / 31
Kat Farrin / 32
Kathie / 33
Dave Petzel / 34
Thruston Martin / 35
John DeWitt / 37
Bev McAloon / 37
Cheri Ellison / 38
Jane Goodrich / 39
Sarah Eichner / 41
Elizabeth Buchsbaum / 42
Gloria Mylyk / 44
Pixie Lauer / 45
Michael Barter / 46
Cindy Thomas / 47
Jenn Turner / 48
Margret VanOrden Maloney / 49

Captain Joe Litchfield / 52
Sarah Goodman Cuetara / 62
Timothy Villilee / 63
Anica Messer / 64
Kendra Chubbuck / 65
Sherry Anders / 66
Ingrid Gaither / 67
Laurie Parker / 68
Sharon Whitham / 69
Ellen Vaughan / 70
Jacqueline M. Gryphon / 71
Chuck Varney / 72
Sarah Trafton Anderson / 72
Jessica Towne George / 73
Pi Crosby / 74
Lily Ellison / 76
Jessica Sanborn / 77
Ellen Berry / 78

The Island Reader offers space for creative self-expression. Islesford and Little Cranberry are two names for the same island. Both names are used interchangeably throughout this anthology. Using the island name submitted by each artist is just one example of how *The Island Reader* honors island identity and islander's self-expression.



Mike Johnson
Sunbeam Captain

Letter from the Editors

Every year *The Island Reader* refuels driven by its mission to express who Maine island people are.

The Island Reader is a summer anthology that represents Maine islands, an extended family united by creative expression, by the rising and falling tides, surrounded by saltwater, and defined through the verbal and graphic imagery of the people living here. They are our island families.

And these are their words, ideas, and images, which express and illustrate their unique, unbridged lives. Some of us have just arrived. Others have been living here for generations. Some are year-rounders. Some are summer people.

But we are all islanders: poets, playwrights, authors, essayists, short story writers, makers, painters, photographers, and dreamers.

As always, we are grateful to the Maine Seacoast Mission for its continued support and dedication to island artists.

Enjoy this gift of art.

Volume 17 is dedicated to Maine Seacoast Mission's Director of Island Health, Sharon Daley. Sharon retired recently from the Mission after over 20 years of service. Sharon was commonly referred to as the Sunbeam's nurse and known for her innovative approach to healthcare. She started the Mission's Telehealth Program which connected isolated islanders to much needed and deserved services. Sharon also started an outer island eldercare network, a group whose mission is helping islanders age-in-place. Sharon is best remembered, however, for the depth of her care and for giving a painless shot. Islanders, and Maine Seacoast Mission, cannot thank Sharon enough for her dedication, her compassion, and her devotion to Maine's outer islands and the people who live on them.



(Photo credit, Kayla Chagnon)

bound to the ocean

to the rising of the tides
the salt in your nose. in your hair.
Home.
drink it up. let it swell inside of you.
cleansing.

Arria Carbonneau
Peaks Island



Danielle Madore
Peaks Island



Our Island

The island is a wonderful place,
It has lots of cool views and lots of cool places.
Long Pond and the Island Store are just a few more. We
have trails and trees.
Ponds and puddles.
Lots of fish, now make a wish.

I hope you come to this island of fun.
Next time you see us on a map
make sure to bring a cap.

Holland Carroll
Poem + Image
Isle au Haut

My Island Home

I've travelled far from my childhood home.
Now here again, I find myself quite alone.
Often times I can hear my memories echo,
Over the beautiful blue ocean waters deco.
As a child I roamed this island that I know.
Growing I saw the seasons come and go.
I spent many hours in my room dreaming,
With those internal secrets often screaming.
The wind rushes over the ocean to land,
Where I have come once again to stand.
When I see the fog rolling in very thick,
Peering through using memory is the trick.
Like the summer flowers, I am fading quickly.
The sun often sets through the fog thickly.
Family and special friends passed on before me,
And my loving parents, I would again love to see.
Alice arrives with a large cool ice cream cone.
Because of it, I don't feel quite so all alone.
I have lost those desires for places still unknown.
Especially those far from this island I call home.





Luther Beal
Poem + Images
Beals Island



Almost Rose

Gull gliding northeasterly over Old Cove –
September fourth.
A lingering glimpse of her underbelly
reflective of our last sunset.
Crimson and soft.
Almost Rose.

My father's caretaker was Rosie.
Our cousin's wife.
She had shown up at the difficult juncture.
Rosie will take care of this at the hardware store;
she's handy that way and stronger than most men.
Almost Rose.

The early afternoon that you flew away,
touristy early September.
We could not have asked for a better day.
Goldenrod and bird songs.
Endless line at Red's Eats.
Out of state plates on parade halted the flow up to you.
And almost Rose.

Penobscot Bay opened wide to your left as
the Sussman House layout was spectacular.
Salt air straight through the doors.
You were handsome and focused with the job ahead.
Our engineer.
Then you Rose.

Jeanne E. Hutchins
Image (previous page) and Poem
Matinicus Island

MAINE MEMORIES

Colorful lobster pots bob on the waves as the Islander ferry cuts through the blue-green swells bringing me closer to my family, back to my roots. Salty sea breezes and soaring sea gulls jar loose memories of my childhood summers spent on Chebeague Island in Casco Bay, Maine. Encircled by sandy beaches and rocky shores, this land of many springs with its medley of seashells, tide pools, starfish, jagged cliffs, seaweed, and rocks ground smooth as satin was my special paradise. I learned the ways of the sea and the wonders of the night sky. My time there was filled with laughter and love, excitement and peace. My eyes fill with tears and there's a lump in my throat as I drift back in time...

A sunny day with brilliant blue skies and billowing white clouds was sheer heaven, but dense fog added a surrealistic ambiance to the surroundings, a quiet stillness that made me feel very much a part of earth and nature. Fog or sunshine, it mattered not when it came to exploring deserted beaches and hidden coves, shorelines covered with millions of tiny little shells, pieces of smooth colored sea glass and seaweed drying in the sun...a veritable paradise for collectors. High tide meant good swimming down at the cove, but it happened on Mother Nature's clock, not at our convenience. Island folks live their lives by the tides.

As the unstoppable tides retreated out to sea, the soggy ocean floor was exposed inch-by-inch, opening up yet another world, sending me on wondrous explorations. Coves revealed gray, slimy mud flats that squished between my toes. They were spotted with telltale tiny holes that squirted when I stamped my foot, a dead giveaway to hidden

treasures—fat, juicy clams. Low tide allowed us to search for starfish that came in all sizes, fascinating creatures that clung to rocks and pilings. They didn't look much like fish to me. They were rough to the touch and shaped like a star, and had hundreds of tiny suction cups on the bottom that curled up and hid when touched. Tide pools captured in the rocky nooks and crannies and warmed by the sun held tiny little fish and snails, grasses and mosses of incredible colors. Each pool offered a kaleidoscope that defied description. Once a month on the exceptionally low ebb tide, Dad and I would wade out on a jetty and search for sand dollars and sea urchins, scallops and huge chowder clams, all wondrous riches from the sea.

It was fun climbing on the rocks of various sizes, many covered with firmly attached mussels and barnacles. Tiny little crabs ran sideways and backwards, seeking their dinner at the water's edge. Much bigger crabs hid in the resting seaweed, waiting for toes to pinch and the returning tide to sweep them back to sea. Big horseshoe crabs with their fearsome lances hid just beneath the sand as they have done since prehistoric times.

Equally exciting were the rocky shores and cliffs, pummeled by the churning and swirling untamed power of the sea, breakers crashing into the crevices with a roar, sending foamy white sprays high into the air. I was in awe thinking of how far those huge undulating waves had traveled to reach our shore, waves that had been smashing against the rocks from the beginning of time. And why, I pondered, was every seventh swell bigger and more powerful than the rest. The clanging of the red triangular buoy warned boats and ships to keep

their distance and added to the ambiance of a day spent on the rocks at Deer Point. I was mesmerized by the assault on all my senses, enchanted as I counted the waves and wrote the poetry of a young girl.

Dad had a boat appropriately named "The May-go" thanks to the temperamental motor hanging off the back. We putted around the shoreline, and I lived in utter dread of losing power, getting tangled in massive beds of brown, swirling seaweed and having to jump into the water to reach the shore. Surely I would drown out of sheer fright! High tides meant good swimming at Campbell's Beach, playing pirates with abandoned dinghies, using stone outcroppings as ports of call. Flat rock skipping contests were endless. My dad was the champion, with at least 14 skips on a good day.

Huge flocks of big white and gray seagulls, scavengers of the sea, were always looking for a handout or simply posing for tourist photographers. I remember the time Dad brought home a mess of mackerel ("mess" being a descriptive word like "a bunch of." Actually, I think the term fits quite well.) After giving dozens away to friends or lobstermen for bait, he dumped the remainder at the water's edge. These shiny blue fish weighed up to three pounds each and were over a foot long--really quite pretty as fish go. It took the gulls about 10 seconds to find them. The huge white birds began congregating, some strutting on the mud flats, others perched on the recently bared rocks and bows of boats, or just drifting on the water, patiently, casing the competition and watching for their chance to swoop in and grab an easy meal. The squawking began, the feeding became frenzied,

and the fish dwindled. As we watched, fascinated, a big old bird waddled up to a good-sized fish and swallowed it whole. Then with amazing greed and ego, he swallowed a second fish. With its tail sticking out of his mouth, he tried to make his get-away. He began running to get up enough speed for his take off, and he ran and he ran, flapping his wings furiously, but the weight of the fish kept him grounded. He finally managed to lift off with the grace of a cargo plane, made it eight feet into the air, and suddenly the second fish popped out of his mouth as though shot from a cannon. With a look of surprise, the gull, having lost his anchor, instantly lifted ten feet straight up. An opportunistic cohort flew under him, grabbed the fish with a big “Hah!” just as it hit the water. We laughed until the tears ran down our cheeks. No one needed TV back then.

A special excursion was a visit to Ogunquit Beach on the mainland. The miles of soft, white sand were covered with an amazing assortment of bronzed human bodies in the summertime, all sizes and shapes, greased and laid out to broil on colorful blankets. As the tide approached, sunbathers retreated, bunching closer and closer together until even walking was a challenge. The biggest physical test of all was, of course, the frigid, numbing, bone chilling Maine water. Dad used to call it invigorating. I called it liquid ice.

I always looked forward to foggy days on Chebeague. They were so wonderful. The mournful sound of foghorns reached my ears as ships at sea tested the nearness of land and other boats as they passed through the opaque clouds. The clanging buoys warned sailors of rocky dangers, and eerie blinking lights from the lighthouse swept through

the fog, helping seafarers find their way to port safely. These were perfect days for picture puzzles and cooking and getting lost in a wonderful book while curled up on soft pillows by a toasty fire.

A sunny day was apt to be spent walking up the hill by the old cobbler's shop, past the brilliant patches of wild orange tiger lilies and deep purple larkspur lining the road, and deeply breathing in the rich perfume of wild roses and the soft fragrance of sea heather that filled the air. Succulent wild raspberries beckoned to be picked, and the fields of blueberries resulted in Mom's delicious hot-from-the-oven pies and muffins. Dad was a whiz at filling his buckets, but my routine was one for the pot and two for me.

Intense memories continue to stab at my heart, traveling on the wings of the sea breeze, birthed on this island of the great stone sloops. Thoughts of yummy Cushman Scotch cookies and delicious clambakes make my mouth water. I smile as pictures flash by of trying to milk Grampy's cow in the old barn and of my cousin Sue and I smoking stolen cigarettes in the closet, singeing our eyebrows, a dead give-a-way to bad judgment and justly punished. I reenact every step of the evening strolls to Mansfield's ice cream shop for five cent cones and to Grampy Bowen's General Store with its penny candy and postcards. The fragrance of balsam tickles my nose as I laboriously stitch tiny pillows for my friends at home. Drying starfish and sand dollars on the porch rail, outhouses and hen houses, assail my nostrils in a different way.

I'm transported back to World War II with island military bases, uniformed soldiers and awesome

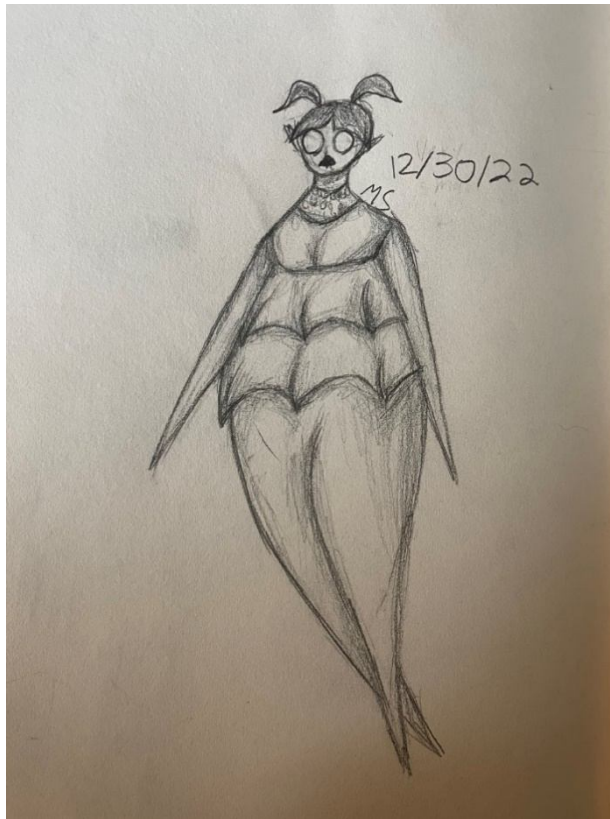
ships offshore. There were the ferries—the small Nellie G and the big Casco Bay Steam Ships—that connected the islands to the mainland. The thrill of catching mackerel, lightning bugs and not so thrilling poison ivy, and the pain of hornet stings, the result of throwing stones at their huge nest, linger for a while. My heart skips a beat as I remember sneaking into Grampy's garage-sized Nazarene Chapel and banging on the old pump organs thinking no one could hear me, but no doubt raising the dead from their peaceful resting place in the cemetery, a lichen covered home to families long gone but one documenting the fascinating history of the island. Big families. Christmas gatherings replete with a Santa Claus and sleigh can never be duplicated, nor could my uncle's huge gray knit stocking with its red top hanging by the wood stove, a lump of coal buried deep within the red toe.

Chebeague Island provided the setting for my first kiss and my first love. The old Stone Wharf and the 9-hole golf course with its picturesque views of the bay dotted with strikingly white lobster boats and colorful buoys change little through the years, nor do the old rusty relics chugging down the road. They're falling apart but never seem to die. I remember it all and so much more. But most important of all, I treasure the warm recollections of lots and lots of family bringing the joy of laughter and the security of love into my young life.

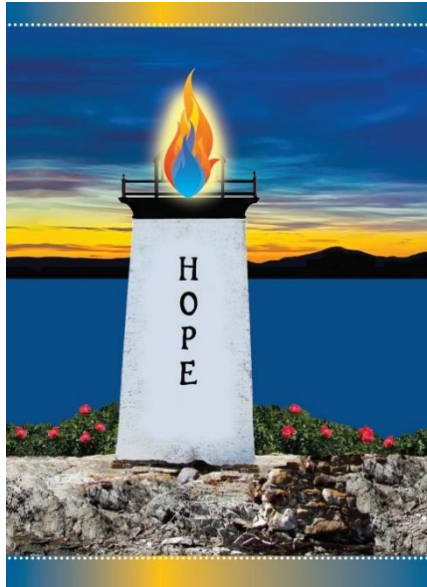
So many memories. But The Islander ferry has arrived at that Old Stone Wharf and my visit here will be all too short. For now I simply thank God for the beauty I see, the peace I feel and the salty taste of the sea breeze caressing my body and soul. Wiping away a tear, I inhale the intense fragrance of

flowers and balsam trees once again. My senses are overwhelmed, as I return to my beloved island of Chebeague and my waiting family.

Judith Bowen Horky
Chebeague



Melanie Sanborn
Great Cranberry Island



Donna Seymour
Islesboro



Susan Sidwell
Matinicus

WAY OF LIFE

On a cold and windy morning, you want to sleep in late
But the shedders and the day old bait won't wait
So ya pack your lunch and get your gear
Kiss your mate just below the ear

LOBSTERING, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

You whistle a tune as you haul your traps
Just follow your strings, no need for maps
And, when the sun comes up, you smile and say
"Morning ol' friend, are ya gonna stay?"

LOBSTERING, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

You band your lobsters, one by one
Fillin' your tote, fore the tide starts to run.
Your muscles ache and you want to cry
But, you won't change a thing 'till the day you die

LOBSTERING, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

You talk to the eagles, and the seal pups too
You never know what will come into view,
You nod at the schooners, and the tourists wave back
They'll speak of your courage as they lay in their rack

LOBSTERING, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

You're teaching your children, and your grandkids too
The ways that your daddy and your grampa taught you,
Just point your bow toward the Eastern Way,
and count your blessings at the end of the day,

Just point your bow toward the Eastern Way,
and count your blessings EVERY day

LOBSTERING, IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

Leona Buswell
Swan's Island



Laurie Farley
Swan's Island

BEACH POEM

At the arch nearest the waves, back pressed
Into a rock carved by the sea to fit my spine
Absorbing radiation and heat while appreciating
The shade of the cove
The seeping Earth's secondhand smoke.
Tide coming in
The warm-up act is one two three four five six black
Ducks they dunk
They flit, they rise up and flap, and dance, like a yawn
Their movements are contagious, the rising sea
Is four to six shades of blue and one duck
Is now far adrift from the pack, maybe
Unaware of the tide's pull, soon I'll have to check
My route, check that it has not been closed temporarily,
The shifting ocean blocking the door until it pulls east.
The bigger question: is there time for one more swim?
Can I swim until my hands go (nearly) numb?
The rattle shifts my consciousness toward auditory pleasure
As certain-sized stones are pushed and pulled
Like aquarium gravel on a glass slide
A fly is going in on my ankle and all eyes turn
With the intent to kill.
When I was all packed up and most of the way back to the
beach exit
Having swam again and having let the tide batter my feet
bottoms with
Small artillery, assaults of pebbles and minor rock
bombardments, I said aloud
Aloud to no one I said:
"I don't have my damn wallet."

Nathaniel Krenkel
North Haven



Nathaniel Krenkel
North Haven



Dorian Edwin
Matinicus

Would There Be Wood?

The days tumble on,
on they roll right
through the silence,
broken by the shriek
of a saw,
the crack of a nail gun.

You can miss
the sound of a voice
and so you talk
to your hammer
and to the radio
but it all palls,
echoes off the new walls.
You can talk to the wood,
begging it to fit,
but it may split
under so little pressure,
sending a splinter your way
to remind you
of its delicate feelings.

When first you notice
the faces in the grain
they pass like
faces on a train.
Later, after the job has dragged
into weeks and months,
you go looking
for that shopkeeper,
searching for that thin
but happy stork.

The site is kept cool
because a body in constant motion
works best in the chill,

while the wood always remains
warm to the touch.

The smell of drywall,
paint and concrete
dulls your nose, but never
the smell of cut wood.

Above the table saw
resin smoke hangs in the air,
pine dust dances by droplight,
and piled about my
sawhorses' wooden legs
shavings are curled to sleep.
Into you the loneliness slowly sinks
like a December sunset, saying,
"There are other ways
to make a living."
But would there be wood?

Weston Parker
Swan's Island

I am Poem:
AUDREY

I am happy and I like cats.
I wonder if I can climb a tree
I hear Momma work a lot
I see Momma eating snacks
I want a cat
I am happy and I like cats
I understand Holland
I say MEOW
I dream of marshmallows
I try to be a cat in school
I hope Santa leaves me lots of presents
I am happy and I like cats.



Audrey Barter
Poem + Image
Isle au Haut

The Rusted Old Brown Chevy Truck

Memories so long ago 30 years give or take a few...

A lobsterman came to our door...
Inquiring about our rusted old brown Chevy truck
interested in buying it...

Who on earth would want that old relic, I said to my
husband on the way out.
I see them walking around the truck - then shaking hands...
A deal was made...

My husband tells me he sold the cab front of the truck for
10 lobsters... ½ of the truck!
Well, what pray tell will we do with the other half?

A few days later my husband propped up the rusted bed of
the truck with two by fours and drove the old truck up to
the lobsterman's garage with his whiskey in hand...
He watched as the lobsterman skillfully welded the two
parts together.

When he returned home, he told me - now the Lobsterman
has a functioning truck! Our good engine welded onto his
good truck bed...

The next day 10 lobsters were delivered...

Months later while doing the dishes I looked out to see our
old brown truck drive by loaded with traps....

I still remember to this day how I felt when I saw that truck
go by...

Even though I was on a remote Maine island 22 miles out to sea that sight made me think that was truly Big City Stuff...

Janet Moynihan
Matinicus Island



Rachel Deschamps
Matinicus

Our Father

These woods were once unrecognizable

But now I know the difference
Between the pine and spruce
The beech and ash

I was lost
along these trails

But now I walk them easily
In the shape of the cross

In the name of the father...

And of the son...

And of the holy spirit...

Katie Urich
Chebeague Island



Kat Farrin
Peaks Island

I Have Been Out Gathering the Rain

I have been out gathering the rain
and Queen Anne's lace, for a wedding love
is everywhere
there is music in the meadow

I have been out gathering the rain
you and your camera
wade down into tall wet grass
to capture something I cannot see . . .

I have been out gathering the rain
who captures who
what calls you as you disappear
into another world?

I have been out gathering the rain Is
it the sparkling jewels that sing
in the spider webs you break through as
you shed the cocoon of one world and
sail on wings into another?

I have been out gathering the rain—
there is no rhyme to this poem
no metaphor or clue to point to meaning; this
is only one bead of rain out of millions shining
in the early morning light.

Kathie
Monhegan



Dave Petzel
Islesboro

The Other Ones

They say it is
the mother, the father,
and the just born,
the wrinkled, crusted elders,
the genealogical ancestors.

But there are others
drawn distantly close,
those surrounders
whom we know
but never speak with.

Soundless messengers.
Smoke from that house chimney there.
The road at night, headlights beaming.
Or instead a nod,
perhaps a glance.
Surrounded by them,
communion of sight.

The unfamiliar handshakes.
No words.

Together coming out of other states.
I have seen you so many times
in that car driving alone,
a stranger because of that,
yet you raise your hand and wave.

Not just people.

Crows and ravens flying and screaming.
their wingbeat movements speaking.
And then silent ones unheard.
Like the deer with its white signal flashing

among the trees.

Somehow
all my family,
though
others say it is the mother and father,
the genealogical ancestors
and the just born,
the wrinkled, crusted elders.
Not those surrounders
like you
whom we know
but never speak with.

So let these words
silent on the page
shout them instead,
or whisper
this family of strangers,
images in memory.

All of you are distant family,
spoken now,
dissolving loneliness.

Thruston Martin
Islesboro



John DeWitt
Isle au Haut



Bev McAloon
Swan's Island

LIMERICK FOR JILL

To knit or crochet is the conundrum for Jill.
As to which for her would be more of a thrill.

For in knitting with needles the music is clatter
spread liberally with chatter.

If you hook and then chain, the dilemma still reigns
as to what our dear Jill wants most to attain.

For an aggregation of knitters is profoundly more "groupie"
than being well known as a hooker most loopy!

Cheri Ellison
Swan's Island

585 Pins

Worn and dusty it is, not being something cleanable. An irony perhaps - a dust-covered container of dust. Yet it remains plump and jaunty, a faded cloth tomato top-heavy with a clutch of pins. A sentinel on my dead mother's dresser, a chaotic catchall defying order, defining haphazardness.

Piercing the tightly woven cloth at every angle is an angry forest of sharpened steel. Anyone of which might touch with too fine a point. Or draw blood. Does anything that achieves such old age retain anger? Resignation I would sooner guess, and probably bafflement.

But for the burden of the pins the tomato is nearly weightless. Packed tight and trussed with green threads, it turns pleasantly in the hand to reveal a small tag sewn on the bottom. *Occupied Japan* the tag proclaims, precisely dating it. When upended the faded fabric warms into its original vermilion, not unlike the rising sun itself which its maker no doubt feared might never shine again.

Surely my mother had no such fears when choosing this simple object at the dime-store. Boys had gone off to wars in unimaginable places with odd names. They'd been brave, she supposed, and returned older, handsome, marriageable. Even with the shadows in their eyes they were fun to flirt with.

The tallest pins tell this story. Towering, sure of themselves and topped with pearls. Intended for hats, church and wedding veils, and placed with hands wearing white gloves.

The stout diaper pins are there too, the inevitable byproduct of the flirting. One is decorated with the plastic head of a cat. A slash of red paint defines the feline mouth. Whether it is smiling or snarling I cannot quite say.

The pincushion may have been a gift and not a purchase, a necessary tool of wifely duties believed requisite. Either way I doubt any pin was thrust into the tomato with other than impatience, for the home arts were not what my mother pursued. Pointedly, not a single sewing needle appears.

The business office was what my mother's heart desired. The desks, telephones and enterprises engaged with the larger world. Here were tasks instead of chores, paychecks rather than a pat on the back, independence, and self-sufficiency. Not to mention the lure of the city, the apartment of one's own, the smart dresses bought in real shops rather than sewn on the kitchen table from brown paper patterns. And the bosses! Men fresh from the military to now command commercial ventures. Ready to marry, settle into neat homes and continue the good work they'd just finished overseas.

Pins from those years survive too. Unremarkable examples from Sears and Roebuck dress shirts. The same shirts she tended carefully for her husband in the evenings after the Dictaphone, diapers and dishes were done with, the housework not disappearing just because the office job dreamed it away. The housework not disappearing even though the husband did.

Thus, most pins are a smaller size. Prized from "junior miss" blouses or pushed into the ribbons of Easter bonnets, the tie-dyed bell bottoms with the gaping waistband, the Girl Scout sashes. They fastened the

capas of Halloween costumes, science fair ribbons, the corsage on the graduation gown.

The story behind each is too insignificant to be recalled, forgotten the instant it sank into the dust of the cushion. Yet crucial and cheap, worthless and long saved, these five hundred eighty-five pins accrue the weight of a lifetime. A prickly cargo borne by a homely object reminding how fugitive are moments and how they will pass, whether you are counting them or not.

Jane Goodrich
Swan 's Island



Sarah Eichner
Monhegan

Childhood

The peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were made in the customary fashion: Sunbeam white bread, creamy Peter Pan peanut butter, Welch's grape jelly, cut into four triangles and placed into plastic baggies. The green grapes were rinsed and also bagged for transport. Unfortunately, neither food travels unscathed and would be bruised by the time they got to the beach. The car was packed with Styrofoam surfboards, metal folding chairs, sunscreen, frisbees, towels and a family of 6, 3 in front and 3 in back. Knees touched knees anytime the car made a sharp turn, and complaints from the back seat arose. It took about 20 minutes to get to the beach, but to a child, it seemed like an eternity.

Once a parking place was secured and the supplies were unloaded, the trek over the walkway began. We had to walk fast; the sand was so hot and burned our small feet when it got in between the plastic thongs of our flip flops.

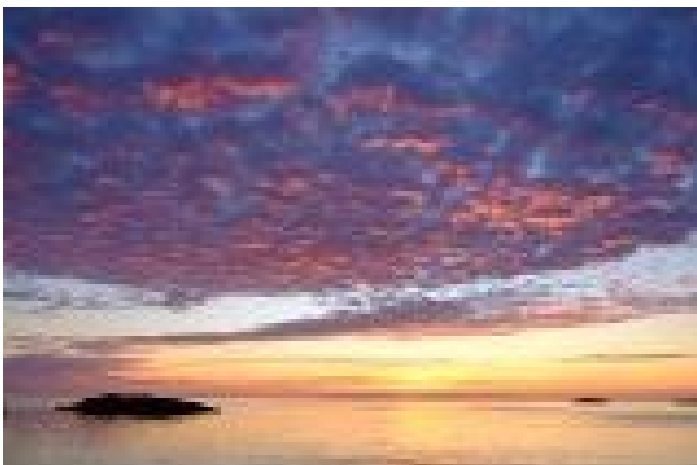
Mom and Dad found a spot on the beach near their friends and began to lay out towels and unfold chairs. We ran, throwing our flip flops mid stride onto the sand and flung our bodies into the ocean. The water was salty and bath-water warm. We dove for sand dollars, jumped and bobbed in between the waves, splashed each other, and tried to avoid the jellyfish. Occasionally one of us was not so lucky and let out a yelp. Hobbling and crying to the shore, the child would run into the waiting arms of Mom who would be ready with the meat tenderizer, a strange but tested and verified remedy for jellyfish stings, better than any over-the-counter medicine.

Soon Mom and Dad yelled and motioned for us to come out of the water. It was time for lunch. Baggies of sandwiches were distributed; the fruit bag appeared and

drinks were poured into plastic cups. The grape jelly had soaked through the bread, but we were hungry enough to not care. There is something about the salt air that makes one ravenous. Sitting on a towel, I tried to wipe my long hair out of my face as the wind kicked up; the sand blew and danced along the ground. Trying to shield my sandwich, I quickly took a bite. But my efforts were not successful. The sandwich had a strange crunchy and gritty texture, one of the hazards of eating on the beach. I moved on to the slightly browned and warm grapes, and then to the graham crackers to conclude the meal. Eager to get back into the water, we had to wait the required 30 minutes after eating. It was time to make drip castles complete with turrets and moats and hope the tide would not wash them away.

The decision of when to leave the beach was often determined by a touch to our pinkish skin as Mom declared that we had gotten too much sun. Back in the car it was hot and smelled of suntan lotion, salt, and sweat. The classical music station went in and out of range and provided a lulling static white noise. Our eyes closed, sandy knees and legs swayed with the movement of the car, and our bodies leaned onto each other as we slept the whole way home.

Elizabeth Buchsbaum
Peaks Island



Gloria Mylyk
Monhegan

The Gardens

The last traps are getting pulled in Preble Cove. The rumbles of the lobster boats I heard all summer long will soon be quiet. The loon pair call back and forth in the grey-pink dawn. The ospreys left three weeks ago... a successful hatch this year. The lone crane is no longer tangling with the gulls for the feast of low tide bounty.

I am pulling the plants so lovingly planted in the spring and adding to the compost pile in the garden. For each one a sad goodbye and a thank you for their fruits. Hauling tubs of seaweed gathered out at Thrumcap to mulch for winter. Chill in the air and tang of woodsmoke across the cove... farewell for now, Cranberry.

Pixie Lauer
Great Cranberry Island



Michael Barter
Isle au Haut



Cindy Thomas
Islesford



Jenn Turner
Swan's Island

A Home For Our Hearts

Sometime around 1918, four young men from the mainland sailed to Matinicus, and that started a love affair that still exists today. They were Bill, Howard, Carl, and Don Bryant. Three of them never forgot that small piece of land ‘offshore.’ Bill continued the family jewelry store in Bangor, Carl became an Admiral in the U.S. Navy, and Don was an attorney in New Jersey.

Around 1933, Don and his wife, Denise, returned to Matinicus and boarded for several weeks each summer with Clifford and Hazel Young at what is now the Ross house. Carl often joined them, and the two men spent many happy hours ‘lending a hand’ on the lobster boats. Carl was described as “hauling a mean anchor.” Bill was an occasional visitor, and wrote a beautiful poem about Matinicus.

However, it was Don and his family who put down more permanent roots. In 1953, he and his wife spent their first summer in their cottage on the harbor. It had taken years of begging before “Aunt Marion” agreed to sell them land “on the harbor.” She was willing to sell them property “up on the island,” but insisted that only rats lived on the shore! Bryant perseverance won out, and she finally agreed with their desire.

Don died a few years later, but Denise continued to spend many, many summers in her charming cottage by the breakwater. After her death her family sold the property, but it still remains an integral part of her children’s and grandchildren’s fondest memories. One of their grandsons married an “island girl,” and they had two children who, of course, have “island blood.”

My mother, Dorothy Bryant VanOrden, was a first cousin to the four young sailors, and as an adult visited Don and Denise on the island that she, too, came to love. I grew up hearing stories of Matinicus, the “lobster wars,” and names such as Bunker, Ames, Philbrook, and Young were familiar to me long before I met members of those families.

My husband and I first visited Matinicus in 1962, and in 1963, Denise gave us the use of her cottage for the entire summer. My husband, a school counselor, found work roofing The Centennial and painting boats, while I filled the role of mother and participated in community activities. We, too, fell in love with island life. As had Don and Denise many years earlier, we approached “Aunt Marion” and asked if we could buy a piece of her land adjacent to the Bryant’s. By now, I guess she had come to realize that “people from away” liked to be on the shore, so she agreed to our purchase, and my husband built our cottage in 1965. Many years have passed since we first stepped ashore from the *Mary A*, and through them all my side of the Bryant family has continued to love the island, as much as my cousins’ side. I truthfully think of it as HOME, and eagerly look forward to each summer. While our children and grandchildren do not have a blood-linkage to Matinicus, they have a deep bond. Our son, Reed, grew up spending his summers “going stern” with a lobsterman who became his guru and working “on the car” for a buyer. Our daughter, Margo, learned to knit bait bags (before the day of pre-made synthetic ones), and became a master at painting wooden buoys. As adults they eagerly await the time to “go to Matinicus.” Our grandsons savor their time on the tiny island, as well.

Here is the poem written many years ago by Bill Bryant, and it expresses what all of the family feel about this special place. We may not be “natives,” but the bond is deep and long-sustained.

The Spirit of Matinicus

Through the crash and roar and the thunder
of Atlantic's ceaseless might
stands a lovely island haven
wrought in beauty, bathed in light.
It has been there unknown ages,
through a million years of life,
never free a single moment
from that ocean's surging strife.
Yet, its head has never been lowered,
And its smile is seldom dimmed;
God put it there – it stands – and will
brave, sturdy and surf- rimmed.
The lesson of that island fair
fight through - stand firm – and smile;
ah, for courage like the spirit of
Matinicus --- lovely isle!

W.C. Bryant

Margret VanOrden Maloney
Matinicus

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE
(A Peaks Island play based upon a true experience)

PLAYERS

ETHAN: Husband to Martha, Captain of the *F/V SARAH C*

MARTHA: Wife to Ethan

JACOB: Son

BETHANY: Daughter

CAROL: Jacob's girlfriend

RICKY: Peaks Island deck hand/friend

SCENE ONE: Kitchen of the cottage—Peaks Island.

(Martha doing kitchen stuff, cooking or sewing, etc. Low music background, Clair de Lune?)

(Enter Ethan)

MARTHA: Welcome home, Ethan (She goes to greet him with a quick hello kiss.) I've been a bit worried about you with all that foul weather you've had out there.

ETHAN: That time of year, Martha. Not much you can do about it.

MARTHA: Well, how was your trip?

ETHAN: Guess we caught our fair share and then some, actually, but we paid a pretty hard price.

MARTHA: What do you mean, Ethan? What went wrong? Are you all right?

ETHAN: I'm finest kind, but Jimmy got a bit rim-racked.

MARTHA: What happened?

ETHAN: Stove up his hand on the capstan. Got a riding turn on the last haul back. Pretty bad. We were workin' down to the Sagadahoc, so we steamed into Rockland. They patched him up some, and he's comin' in on the Greyhound in the mornin'.

MARTHA: Will he be all right?

ETHAN: Ya, Maggie, but he won't be able to sail for a time. But that's not all.

MARTHA: What else, Ethan?

ETHAN: Young Eric has gone on his yearly booze bout a bit early. He's right in the scuppers with the jags. Brought on by Jimmy's molly hocken, but he don't need much of an excuse, I reckon.

MARTHA: He's never been the same after his father went down on the *SALLY J*, a couple of years ago.

ETHAN: Who has?

MARTHA: What you plannin' on doin'?

ETHAN: Well, Maggie, when we was offloading at the Portland Fish Exchange, I asked around for a couple of deck hands. There's no dragger men anymore. I used to be able to go up to Sangilo's on India Street and find a net man in a heartbeat. No more.

MARTHA: Why's that, Ethan?

ETHAN: Nearly all the good boats and fisherman have been forced of the waterfront by the condo ownin' Boston Yuppies. No one cares about the workin' waterfront guys anymore. No one. Cultural destruction, if you ask me.

MARTHA: Well what cha gonna do?

ETHAN: Ran into Ricky at the Legion. He said he go for a trip or two. But I'll still need Jacob for this next trip. It's Christmas week; he won't miss much school.

MARTHA: You know how I feel about our son going to sea, especially in winter. It's dangerous out there, Ethan, and you know it!

ETHAN: I do know it, but the market is good, and we need the money. We've got to get this Christmas trip in to make the boat payment and take care of this place, too.

MARTHA: I'm dead set against it, Ethan.

ETHAN: I know, Martha. But I'm up against it too, by golly. Let's ask Jacob. He's practically a man now.

MARTHA: He's a boy! He's a senior in high school! He's an athlete, not a fisherman!

ETHAN: He can be both, don't you know.

(Ethan calls for Jacob. Enter Jacob.)

JACOB: Hi, Dad, how was your trip?

ETHAN: Fair to middlin', Jakey Boy, but we had a couple of mishaps. I'm going to need you to come out with us this trip. I'm really short-handed. What do you say, Son?

MARTHA: Jacob, you'd have to skip a couple of days school and the weather this time of year is really bad. I don't want you to go. I need you here on the Peaks with me.

JACOB: I know, Mom, but if Dad says he needs me, I'm a gonna go.

ETHAN: All right then. We sail at 0400 tomorrow from the Island and go to Portland to get fuel, ice and some grub. Bring warm clothes. I think your oilskins are still aboard. And don't forget you boots and sou'wester.

JACOB: (With great enthusiasm.) O.K. Dad! I'm right two-blocked! Let's nail 'em!

(Exit Ethan and Martha. Lights fade, then brighten. Enter Bethany.)

JACOB: Hi, Bethy Ca Bubbles. What's new with you today?

BETHANY: Jake e Cob, don't call me Bethy Ca Bubbles. You know I hate it! (Taps him playfully on the shoulder.)

BETHANY: I heard you talking to Mom and Dad about going out this next trip. Please don't go, Jacob. Please don't go. It's too dangerous this time of year, and you know it.

JACOB: Don't tell Dad, Bethany, but I don't really want to go fishing, but he needs me, and I won't disappoint him. I can't let him down.

BETHANY: Dad can find someone else! You don't have to go!

JACOB: Dad says that he couldn't find anyone. He's lucky to have ol' Ricky for a couple of trips.

BETHANY: You're just as stubborn as Dad. (Bethany hugs her brother.) Jakey, please be careful out there, O.K? Please, Please, Please.

(Exit Bethany. Lights dim.)

NEW SIDE SCENE

(Enter Carol. Jacob and Carol look around, then kiss each other quickly.)

JACOB: Hi, Carol. What brings you over tonight?

CAROL: You! Don't you dare go, Jacob. Just say, "NO."

JACOB: How did you find out about me going fishing?

CAROL: Bethany called me; she's upset about this.

JACOB: How did you get here so quickly, girl?

CAROL: What's wrong with you? I just live across the street you know.

JACOB: That Bethy should go to work in broadcasting; she loves to deliver the news.

CAROL: That's because your sister loves you. She cares about you. So do I.

JACOB: Which one? Love or Care?

CAROL: Both, you darn fool boy. Jake, you should know that after all these years.

JACOB: Do you remember when I paid your brother, Pauly, ten cents to shut the porch light off at your porch so that I could kiss you goodnight after we came back from the teen dances at the Club?

CAROL: Jacob, my brother, Paul, was a scammer. I paid him ten cents, too!

JACOB: Well, Missy, we do go back a long time. Nice memories, by golly.

CAROL: I don't want memories, Jakey. I want a future with you. Please don't go out on the *Sarah C* tomorrow. I need you. I love you.

JACOB: I love you, too, Carol, but I am going. I have to help my dad.

CAROL: You're as stubborn as your father.

JACOB: Yes, I've been told that. Well, what do you say? When I get back can we maybe, you know, fool around a little?

CAROL: In your dreams, boy. In your dreams.

JACOB: Yes, Miss Carol, exactly!

(Exit Jacob. Enter Martha.)

SCENE TWO: Wheelhouse of the F/V *SARAH C*

(Ethan at the helm. Enter Jacob.)

JACOB: Hi, Dad. We'll do okay this trip. What do you think?

ETHAN: Fair to middlin', Jakey Boy, fair to middlin'. But I'm gettin' a bit concerned about the weather.

Jacob: Why? Looks good to me. What's goin' on, Dad?

ETHAN: The glass is a droppin' pretty quick. Down to 27.9 already. I think we might be in for a gale o' breeze right shortly.

JACOB: What's the big deal, Dad?

ETHAN: Well, sometimes watchin' you two fellas on deck I'm a thinkin' you're both lookin' like a couple of high-tide-clam diggin'-cod-whoppin'-sons-o'-beboppin'-Canadian-basket weavers! You're both so slow it would take you an hour to make that minute rice your Mom stowed in the galley!

(Enter Ricky)

ETHAN: You fellas put your oil skins on. We'll be a haulin' her back right shortly, and I want you both to be a wearin' your work vests, too! Understand? Ricky, make sure they are fetched up right solid and the strobes are a workin'. Looks like a front a comin' at us from the eastern. She might get a bit knurly out there, don't you know.

RICKY: Got you covered, Cap. Let's make a day of it. In this business your pay is directly proportionate to your pain. Right?

ETHAN: Ya, but, well, ner-the-less, keep an eye on the boy here, O.K.?

RICKY: Finest kind, like I said, got ya covered, Cappy.

JACOB: Jeepers, Dad. I'll be fine. Stop treating me like a kid. O.K.?

ETHAN: Well, I guess you're right, Son. But still.

(Exit Jacob and Ricky)

(Dim lights. Sounds of a gale and motions of the vessel.
From off stage yelling from Ricky.)

RICKY: Man Overboard! Man Overboard! Cap! Jake's
washed over! Jake's in the water port side! Port Side!

ETHAN: Heave that life ring, Ricky! Damn it! Heave that
life ring! We're all stop! Find him, Ricky!

RICKY: (From off stage) I don't see him, Ethan! I don't
see him!

ETHAN: Find him, Ricky! Save him, Ricky! Save my boy!

(Grabbing the VHF radio) MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
MAYDAY! This is the *SARAH C.* MAN OVERBOARD!
M.O.B! M.O.B! We're on Cashes Ledge. 60 fathom curve.
Any vessels near? Help find my boy. Help me please!

BILLY: (VHF radio response) Ethan, this is Billy on the
PIONEER. We're just to the south'ard of you, about four
miles. Heading your way now.

ETHAN: O.K. Billy. Quick as you can. Please.

BILLY: She's right in the corner, Ethan. Right two-blocked.
Be there soon.

ETHAN: (Yelling to Ricky) See anything, Ricky?

RICKY: No, Cap. Just a boat getting a little closer.

ETHAN: That's Billy on the *PIONEER*. Comin' to help
out.

BILLY: (Over the VHF) *SARAH C. PIONEER*. Over.

ETHAN: (Grabs VHF mike) Tell me you found him, Billy!

BILLY: We did find him, Ethan, but Jacob didn't make it. He's dead, Ethan. Hypothermia, I reckon. His body is on my deck now. We yarned him aboard a few minutes ago. So sorry, my friend. What do you want me to do now?

(Lights fade for a moment. Storm music level comes down.)

(Enter Ricky. Ethan hugs Ricky)

ETHAN: You O.K. Rick?

Ricky: A bit chilly but finest kind, Cap, all things considered, I recon. I'm so sorry for not taking better care of Jacob. I'll never sleep again.

ETHAN: Not your fault, Rick. I should never have taken him out in the first place.

(Exit Ricky. Ricky hangs his head. Looks out to the sea.)

ETHAN: Jacob, my son, you were much too young to swallow the anchor. May God forgive me. I'm so sorry, my boy. So sorry.

SCENE THREE: Kitchen, Peaks Island

(Martha, Bethany and Carol sitting. Enter Ethan.)

(Martha runs and hugs Ethan. Martha stands apart slightly from Ethan and starts punching him on his chest.)

MARTHA: How could you, Ethan? How could you! You lost our Jacob!

ETHAN: Martha, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

MARTHA: I'll never forgive you. Never!

ETHAN: I don't deserve forgiveness, Martha. Don't want it.

(Bethany and Carol hug Martha. Ethan stands alone.)

Captain Joe Litchfield
Peaks Island

How to Put This Morning By for Another Time

Write three gratitudes.

Write every day for five years.

Gratitude for 50 milkweed seeds Steve saved and handed me on the boat.

For the soil that covers them now.

For next November's explosion of nomad ballerinas.

Gratitude for the laundry and trash cycles churning, same as the seeds, turning over and over. For the day's work begun, and days never done; for the ocean churning and its salt preserving.

Gratitude for writing, churning like an old ice-cream bucket, slow to crank up, sped along by desire, and the force of my arm, through the ice and rock salt of my brain, to freeze the gratitude for later devouring.

Today I'll plant garlic in its paper hulls.

Today, I'll transplant the herb plants before they freeze to death. Today I'll write lines that articulate the bones of the season and I'll share them with a friend.

Sarah Goodman Cuetara
Peaks Island



Timothy Villilee
Isle au Haut

What is an Island family?

What is a family?

What do you do?

Do you learn about it in school too?

What are family jobs?

How do you work?

How do you play?

A family is people.

People you love.

People who love you.

An Island family is a family who works.

It's a family who plays.

And a family who helps.

It is a big family, but we all love each other.

We all help each other when we need it,

And we all play with each other when we can.

We are all in it together.

That's what an Island family is.

Anica Messer
Matinicus Island



Kendra Chubbuck
Isle au Haut



Sherry Anders
North Haven Island



Ingrid Gaither
Great Cranberry Island



Laurie Parker
Swan's Island



Sharon Whitham
Great Cranberry Island



Ellen Vaughan
Monhegan

November Crow

i heard your call before i glimpsed your shadow
rippling across the blanched, cloven trunk,
lightning's signature inscribed from summer past.

headed east across the bay to join the island's flock,
i couldn't think of your grouping as a murder,
no felonious actions or intent apparent
you seemed unjustly accused.

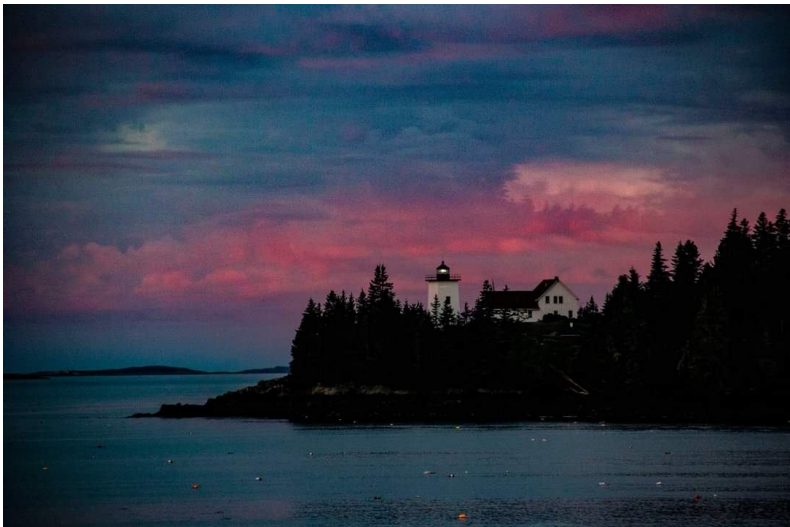
you cried out joy—
in the warming oil of your sleek contour feathers
in the spotlighting from broken clouds,
your swooping and careening proved a master
performance.

showman in flight,
as you burst upward from your perch could you see,
the poisoner of crows holding something in a dish—
or were you oblivious?

Jacqueline M. Gryphon
Peaks Island



Chuck Varney
Chebeague



Sarah Trafton Anderson
Swan's Island



Jessica Towne George
Peaks Island

Nectar

Swords sharp and hive abuzz,
Promise of a heaven still,
Better me than him because,
None truly die on death's fertile hill.
Wicked white-clad warriors wander,
Gleaming helms donned in preparation,
The battle a chance to escape our squander
A meager worker's second salvation.
Queen's call to arms hums through the barracks,
Angry wings flap to-and-fro,
Ignored only by elders and heretics,
Lead the charge, and out we go!
Smoke clouds the sky and blades clash and bend;
Steel finds chink, ripped stem to stern, was it all worth it in
the end?

Pi Crosby
Peaks Island



Susan Sidwell
Matinicus



Lily Ellison
Swan's Island



Jessica Sanborn
Great Cranberry Island

It's a Definite Maybe

I love you, it's a definite maybe
I'll be with you, it's a definite maybe
Alternative reality, dubious integrity
I see what I want to see, it's all...about... ME

Our leaders, are a definite maybe
Public servants, a definite maybe
Honor and integrity, now complicit gluttony
Computer data feeds the beast, the only right... is... ME

Our world, is a definite maybe
Human life, a definite maybe
Other species are extinct, because of us
Pretty feathers for our hats, its all... about.... US

Bridge: Interdependence is the truth,
We all need water to live
Polluting and greed hurts us all
Eventually we'll fall
Our planet it's not a definite maybe

We are wounding her, it's not a maybe
Spraying poison on our food, thinking its ok
The soil is dying from abuse, we are on... our... way
I love you, it's a definite maybe
I'll be with you, it's a definite maybe, it's a definite maybe
it's a definite maybe

Ellen Berry
Islesboro

Island Writers & Artists



(photo credit, Jennifer McKibben, Matinicus)

You are invited to contribute your
work to

The Island Reader **Volume 18** **Summer 2024**

The Unbridged Edition

Submission deadline:
DECEMBER 31, 2023

For complete details visit
www.seacoastmission.org/islandreader

About Maine Seacoast Mission

117 years ago, two Mount Desert Island pastors and brothers, Alexander and Angus MacDonald, sailed a small sloop named *Hope* to isolated islands and lighthouses across the state of Maine. This trip became the first hallmark of Maine Seacoast Mission, the nonprofit they founded in 1905. Today, the organization serves the state's unbridged outer islands and Downeast coastal towns.

Headquartered in the village of Northeast Harbor, the Mission offers islanders numerous medical treatment, social and educational opportunities as well as spiritual and pastoral support through its boat, the *Sunbeam*, and from its Downeast, Cherryfield campus.

Maine Seacoast Mission is thankful to the communities it works alongside. Please visit: www.seacoastmission.org.



(Photo credit, Douglas Cornman)

**Beal's Island
Chebeague
Great Cranberry Island
Isle au Haut
Islesboro
Islesford
Matinicus
Monhegan
North Haven Island
Peaks Island
Swan's Island**



Maine Seacoast Mission