

**Inkslingers Session**  
**7th December 2024**



*Dardagna Falls - Bologna Italy*

*"I know this may be hard to believe, but I'm on  
your side."*

## Those Who Find the Sea

Greg Fields

“Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth. Whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul, whenever I find myself pausing before coffin warehouses. . .I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.”

- Herman Melville, Moby Dick

Late in the day, Conor and Adrienne walked the beach, holding hands, not talking. The sun drew low and the small crowd of people dissipated with the fading light. Seagulls swooped and dive-bombed the sand for the bits they left behind. The lighthouses on Thatchers Island flickered to an early glow, then grew brighter. Laughter floated down from the deck of one of the huge houses adjoining the beach, and two flimsy fishing boats tottered their way back to Gloucester harbour.

They stopped to look out at it all, to note the peculiar scent and sense of this day’s denouement. To breathe the sea; to carry the dimming sun into the cradle of the soul; to feel the warmth of a cautious lover’s hand, a bruised lover’s heart.

At length Conor turned to Adrienne, cupped her face in his hands and kissed her deeply and softly. Purely. He looked into eyes that did not turn away from the intensity of his gaze.

“I wish we could go back twenty years, Adrienne. You. Where we were, where we went, the things we felt.”

“You always took things way too seriously, Conor. All we can do is move along and see if there’s anything left to us. And after all this, I know it may be hard to believe, but I’m on your side. By your side.”

Conor looked back out to the sea, darkening and immense. “We should go,” he said softly. Adrienne nodded silently. They turned to walk back to their spot in the now deserted sands, gathered the chairs and the towels and the

bags. Silently then, back to the car and the short drive down the coast to Gloucester.

Following dinner and a bottle of wine, the two sat on the deck of the guest house that overlooked an inlet where fishing boats bobbed and creaked. They sipped the day's final glass of wine and regarded the water lights as the half-moon played child's games with the clouds, darting in and out.

"I can't help but think of the history of this place," Conor reflected, speaking slowly. "New England. The ones who first sailed here and what they found. The simplicity. The harshness. The courage that brought them here. I don't mean Boston, or Plymouth, or any of those places. But up here now, looking at these boats. North of Boston where they found a good harbor and made what they could of it. I think of 400 years ago, and how we share this ancient space now. And I think that maybe we see and smell and sense the same things. At least I like to think so."

"You seem drawn to the past today, Conor. More than usual."

Conor smiled, then sipped his wine slowly. "Maybe not history. Maybe continuity. Linking to what was and still feeling a part of it."

"I'm not sure that's possible, Conor. Everything changes. Everything evolves. Or it dies. We have no choice in the matter."

"I know," Conor said. "But that doesn't mean I have to like it. Shall we end this day?" He rose and extended his hand. Adrienne held it as he helped her up from her chair and led her back inside.

They made love that night for the first time in weeks. As they did so, Conor smelled the summer in Adrienne's hair, breathed it deeply, caressed gently the suntanned elegance of her delicate face, inhaled her perfumed scent of roses and hyacinth. Her delicate frame moved in rhythm with his own, and Adrienne ran her hands again along the musculature of his shoulders and back, reached down to the line of his strong legs, and tasted the salty tang of his body.

They had not drawn the shades to their bedroom which adjoined the deck. Anyone across the narrow inlet, anyone walking along the docks a few steps beyond their deck, might have looked in and seen their bodies in motion, glimpsed the rising and falling. Conor knew this, lost now in feelings too long deferred. He knew this, and cared not a bit.

'I would share this passion with the whole world, and all who walk through it.'

When they were done, Conor fell back, and Adrienne turned onto her side to nestle against him, placing her hand against his heart. "So sweet," she murmured. "So sweet." Within a few minutes her breathing eased into the quiet patterns of night sleep

Conor Finnegan lay flat, felt the soft press of his wife, drew in deeply once again the blends of her aroma, then turned his head to look out the window to the lights on the far headlands. He heard again the occasional bleat of a gull, and the bobbing of the small boats moored to the docks.

And, as he heard these sounds, as he saw the flickering of a dancing moon and harbour lights on the ceiling and far wall, as he inhaled the distinctive tang of the sea and the creatures who lived within it, he reflected on the press of 400 years, and of twenty.

## An Orphan called Pinky

Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.



The echo of high heeled boots bounced off of the walls in the near ancient halls of a Mexican Monastery. It was a special place provided by a combination of funding from The Vatican and the Mexican government itself to provide a resting community for retired Priests and Nuns. Upon reaching a very specific door, a tall, young woman, clad head to toe in leather gear, wrapped gently on its ancient wood.

An elderly woman in the garb of a Nun opened the door and her face was instantly a mask of confusion. This biker-clad young person seemed completely out of place in that corridor.

“May I help you?”, she offered with a distinct British accent.

“Not really, except to show me to Father Barringer, I need to speak to him, it’s really a pressing matter, one could even say life and death.”, The young woman answered, both informative and cryptic.

“And whom shall I say is calling Miss...”, The old nun asked.

“Tell him its Bethsaida Morales, or better yet tell him ‘Pinky’ is here to see him.

A moment or two later the elderly woman returned and guided Betsy through a series of hallways that ended in a large chamber where Father Barringer,

now retired, sat before a pile of books and journals. On the desk before him, was a freshly poured cup of tea, its steam spewing heavenward. A bright, red, apple sat next to it.

Father Barringer stared at the young woman before him, dressed in black, body-hugging leather, dark hair up in a violent, unnatural style, and sporting several facial piercings.

“Good morning young lady, the years have dulled my mind a bit and so I fear you’ll have to be explicitly clear as to your identity and purpose in coming all this way. Do I know you?”, the wrinkled face was alien yet familiar to Betsy’s eyes. She kept her emotions on a tight rein for the moment.

“You were the overseeing Priest in charge of a school not far from here, were you not? ‘La Sagrada Hermosa’, boarding school and children’s orphanage. Does that refresh your memory, Sir?”, Betsy offered with a delicate smile. She then sat in the chair before his desk, tired of his lack of manners in offering her a seat.

“Ah yes, you were the one with the brother. The one-eyed boy with the bad dreams. He was a bit younger than you and bit me once. How may I help you today, Ms. Morales?” Father Barringer inquired.

“I’ve been waiting quite a while to speak to you and find it highly disappointing that you don’t specifically remember me or my nickname, ‘Pinky’. It was the humiliating moniker that the other orphans gave me after you spanked me in front of the class for stealing an apple to feed my little brother. It was the first and ironically least of the many cruel and undignified things that your white collar and Vatican credentials allowed you to perpetrate. But fear not, I’ve come to terms with it. It’s just who you are. In fact, this may be hard to believe, but I’m on your side.”, She said, as she leaned back and crossed her legs on the top of his desk.

“Young lady, Mrs. Pinky, or what have you. This is highly irregular, and I must insist that you plainly state your purpose or leave this place at once, beginning with the removal of those hideous boots from my desk!”, The old man tried to roar, his ancient frame shaking from the sudden verbal effort.

“Very well, Mr. Barringer. You’ll pardon me if I don’t refer to you as ‘Father’, seeing as you were the antithesis of any such title. I’m here for confession.

“You want to confess?”, Father Barringer asked, a bit confused.

“No, Sir. I’m here for your confession. I want you to confess to the cruel tortures and indignities to which you subjected my brother and I, along with countless other orphans. I want you to confess to selling us to local drug farmers and brothels as slave labour, and most of all I want you to confess to being a sadistic hypocrite in a holy man’s uniform, interested only in the subjugation of children as well as lining your own pockets.”, She poured out in a flat, matter-of-fact tone. She went on. “I’m sure that even you, have read Matthew 7:20, ‘By their fruits you will know them’?” That Biblical quote sent the shadow of fear crawling across Father Barringer’s face, as he found himself rather unprepared for this scathingly accurate list of accusations.

“Here, this should help.”, Betsy said, allowing herself a light grin.

She then removed her left leather glove and placed it on the desk. A moment later, an odd, quite inexplicable thing, began happening. Her hand’s pinky finger detached and floated from her, touching the red apple that sat on the old priest’s desk. It then gently floated back and reattached to her hand. Father Barringer’s confusion and shock could not be masked. The apple shook, sprouted four legs, slitted, yellow, snake-like eyes, and a row of razor-sharp teeth. It then ran across the desk toward the now terrified man of the cloth. In a state of sheer panic, his trembling lips blurted out the word “Heresy!”, right before it reached his neck. The now animated apple bared teeth and took a sharp bite out of his wrinkled neck, sending blood spewing in all directions as he began spasming and whipping his limbs about.

A few minutes later, his lifeless eyes were staring at the ceiling. Pinky stood and walked around the desk. She stopped and stared at the lifeless husk before her, thereafter, making the sign of The Cross. “I hereby accept your confession and absolve you of your sins”. She then left the apartment and monastery, intent on visiting the next client on her list. It was extensive.

## Waterfall

Ciaran O'Melia

We have a fall in the town where I live. It is not a large volume of water that goes over the falls, and the town has a walk down to it. It is not known to everyone.

I have walked this place, and it brings tranquillity. It is best to see it in the Autumn, as the large body of water goes over the falls.

This was built as a turbine to power the factories and was electrified in the early 1900s. Believe it or not, it brings peace to my heart. There are plaques to show the development of the falls.

That brings me to the second prompt. All over the world, you hear this commitment. If only he/she had not done that.

A split in the royal family started the First World War; yes, they will say the Duke was Assassinated. But think of the cost of carnage: millions of people wrecked, killed or made homeless. Oh, why was it worth it?

Then, the master race. Went to war over depts owned by the First War; why was this?

We could not shout STOP.

First, it was infirm, then they rounded up the Roma and moved on to the communists and the Jews, six million of them, but why did we not shout STOP?

Around 1948, the largest mass movement on earth took place, with Indian people moving to India and Pakistani



people moving to Pakistan. Whole trainloads of people slaughtered pulled into the station. Yet this was drawn up in six weeks by a civil servant. and why did we not shout STOP?

In my own country, Ireland, we have over 3,000 killed and many injured, yet as General Kitson said it brings on a level of preparedness.

Now Israel, having learnt from the masters, has pounded over 40,000 killed and many children slaughtered.

## Mark L'estrange

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The next day, the lads went to Smith's, and Larry spoiled Johnny and himself with lots of toys. While they were there, they ran into Mr. Shopper, who, as you can imagine, had a trolley filled to the brim with toys. His daughter Mary was with him, looking really happy. Larry joked, "I've nearly bought as much as you today!"

Mr. Shopper chuckled and replied, "I can see that, son. I saw your ad on TV last night about your Lamppost Burger. I must try a few of them soon."

Mary glanced at her father with concern and said, "I'm worried about how many of them he'll buy."

Just then, they bumped into the school bully, Nigel, who, surprisingly, was in an unusually kind mood. "Larry, I loved your Lamppost Burger ad," he said. "I even asked my dad to get me one!"

The lads exchanged astonished looks. Johnny finally said, "You've changed your tune, haven't you?"

Nigel nodded earnestly. "I know you might find this hard to believe, but I'm on your side now, lads."

Larry thanked him and added, "If you treated people like this more often, you'd have a lot more friends."

Nigel looked thoughtful for a moment, then asked, "Would it be okay if I hung out with you at school? You guys always seem to have so much fun."

Johnny and Larry shared a quick glance before replying in unison, "Sure, but on one condition—no more picking on anyone."

Nigel grinned. "Deal."

To be continued...