

Old Salty

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That bastard, Old Salty. It was Reggie; he was playing with the plastic salt and pepper shakers at the roadside lobster shack.

Cap'n Pepper tries and tries but Old Salty is never happy. Think I'm about happy two thirds of the day, how 'bout you? Reggie asked and ordered a hamburger and onion rings from the tired looking teenager waiting on us.

This is a beach town—shouldn't you order fish and chips or something? He always did stuff like that. In steak houses, he'd only order a basket of bread, one baked potato or side of steamed carrots.

I like these hamburgers; the best ones are always at these greasy joints. They use real meat and taste like the 1950s would taste; euphoric practicality, curt but gooey. Wonderland, I would imagine.

I sighed, looked out the window. A girl was buying an over-sized inflatable shark. She looked too old to be playing with those sorts of things. I want to go to that bar tonight where they only serve Cape Codders, I said. If you try and order a Lemon Drop or Mojito they simply nod towards the door.

Fuck the trendy places. Let's grab some Narragansett and crawl down to the beach, get sunburnt and throw rocks at tourists.

I wasn't so sure, I was tired, wanted to leave, just swim maybe; swim past the deep sea buoys and patches of dense seaweed. Check the oyster beds with the fishermen, rake quahogs with the old men. Imagine Great Whites swimming just below me ready to pounce, skates and horseshoe crabs ready to nick my skin, drag me down.

His burger came; it was tiny, the meat dwarfed by an enormous bun.

He wolfed it down. Gidget and Wally cleaver, that's what it's about.

I'm not so sure, I said and finished my pile of fried oysters and calamari. I ordered a Cape Codder, drank it slowly while Reggie tucked the shakers in his pockets.

Free souvenirs, he said.

