

THE FAR END OF THE EAST END

On even numbered days, they ate steak, otherwise fish, and always with a salad. Their drinks stayed perpetually cold in the summer house. A metal pot in the kitchen when full was too heavy to lift onto the stove.

Shopping for them was an excursion, over that distant sand dune; The shopping list was carefully scrutinized. They required wine, wine, and more wine, until they stopped whining. Being so close to the water makes everything seem weathered, including the locals.

They wondered where the late-summer afternoon went, and what memories washed ashore over those colorful mermaid tears, knowing that the vegetable stand closes for the season in two hours.

Julie kept burying her toes in the sand and wiggling them to the surface. She suggested over the winter, somebody could put more sand back on the beach. The house receives the phone and electric service from a leaning pole.

The lines bowed in the middle, and barely attached to the house. Once the land line rang and startled them: Julie was brave enough to answer it. Surprise, it was a party line reminding them they were not alone on the East End.

One night a light bulb blew, and everybody searched for candles. Somebody found a television in the shed, leave it Karen pleaded. It shows black-and-white images from a time when we were too young to understand.

A paint by numbers piece above the mantle in the living room has a mirror-like sheen to it of squirrel faces in a montage painting, some only partially seen as if incomplete or missing. The painting was in complete contrast to the way they were feeling after a couple of drinks.

Karen wanted to hide it in the shed. One night the rain was their entertainment, until Julie danced with an umbrella asking who should write about Summer. Dreamers or Realists. They all laughed, knowing it was them.