

Lovelies on the Beach

by Ajay Nair

He sets his bag down by the boulder and sits down on it. From here, the view is clear — he can make out the gestures of the four girls frolicking by the water, he can play at guessing their thoughts. He breathes in the air, then slides his tongue out and tastes it. Wet with a bit of salt in it.

He unpacks his rifle from the bag, looks through its scope and imagines shooting at the girls. He pictures their heads and bodies exploding, the blood spilling into the water, or maybe diluting the soft sand. His heart races at the thought but his hands are steady, adopting a state of preternatural calm.

The last time these girls were on the beach, they had a fifth companion. She waded too far out, cried for help. No one moved a muscle. These girls stared in horror, mouths open, their colorful swimsuit-clad bodies stuck like mute outposts on the shore. This was not what they reported though. He had looked into their eyes when they told him about their heroic efforts to save his daughter and he knew they'd been lying.

He doesn't intend to lie after this. For now, he just wants to take in the sea and the quiet. He eats his sandwich.

In the afternoon, he will pick them off one by one, these lovelies cavorting on the beach. He has all the time in this world.

