

It Sure Was Good

by Chris Okum

Among the small group of people who knew them they were considered unmemorable as individuals and barely noticeable as a couple. When attention was paid, it was usually for small gestures or conversational tics that were irritating in the moment and then forgotten immediately. She had the habit, when discussing sex, to spell out ("S-E-X") rather than say the word. He had the habit of bringing a dozen red roses to functions where either a gift or nothing at all would have been more apropos. She complained about the amount of parking tickets he had accrued and refused to pay, and he complained about how she always responded to gentle and playful criticisms with personal attacks that went straight for the emotional jugular. They were both modest and self-deprecating, but in a way that made being modest and self-deprecating seem both depressing and signifying that there was something inherently bleak and unkempt about their inner landscapes. When they finally separated no one called to offer their condolences or see how either one was doing. She moved away to a small coastal town and got a job at a small supermarket that specialized in British delicacies, and, as such, cut off all ties with everyone from her previous life. He remained in the city, but, like her, grew distant from the people in his meager social circle. The day of their divorce he came to the attorney's office wearing an old pair of board shorts and mud-caked flip-flops. It took him approximately eighteen minutes to sign the divorce papers. Afterwards he went to a coffee shop and ordered what was advertised as the best fried chicken in town, but noticed, when the fried chicken came, that it was baked, not fried. He was a reader. She was a watcher. He felt war should only be experienced through literature. She wanted to see the blood and guts on television. Why they had ever thought they would last wasn't beyond anyone's comprehension, just theirs.

