

French Fries

by Christian Bell

He left the house saying he was walking but was really going for french fries. Canto's Pizza, three blocks away. His wife would say, don't get them, remember your heart, our healthy lifestyle. Ten years since the procedure, he'd say, and we moved to the city to walk places, get exercise. His doctor's words—moderation, and forget the salt.

Tuesdays she worked afternoons at the bookstore, and he'd secretly go, buy a large order, sit in a corner with a newspaper. Fries covered in vinegar, veins of ketchup. Like sunny beach days of his youth, free-flowing arteries, greasy boardwalk food. Sunlight toasting his back, he'd swim to that dangerous spot where the ocean could swallow him. At night, he'd lie in bed, feel the ocean's rush all over again.

So this Tuesday, immersed in his paper and food, he heard a familiar voice: his wife's. She ordered pizza and onion rings, food he'd not seen her have in ten years, sat in a different corner and read. Oblivious to him. The paper as shield, he peeked at her occasionally enjoying the food. He wanted to stand, say, what about eating healthy, but she looked young, happy. Every Tuesday could be a date, he thought, he lurking as her secret admirer, the two of them living unhealthy.

