

# Dream Boats

*by* Elizabeth Kate Switaj

The Inauguration Day Windstorm had blown out half the downtown lights to celebrate its twenty-first birthday. Two old friends flecked with gray snow and white hair sat on the boulders that kept the Sound from sweeping away Myrtle Edwards Park.

Look at all the branches floating around, he said.

When I was a little girl, at summer camp, we used to glue shells and a candle to driftwood. We called it a dream boat.

He laughed. Great name.

She blushed. Awful name! But our counselors said our wishes would come true if the candle burned out before it sank.

Did it work?

I live alone in an efficiency studio and work at Tully's. What do you think?

You still paint; I don't have time anymore.

I've never had a show.

You do art walks.

Amateur hour in Edmonds. The truth about the dream boats is that they were teaching us to let go of our dreams—literally, physically.

Not a bad skill to have. I thought I'd be famous by now, but . . .

You gave up.

I like my life.

But don't you ever wish you could be more?

He reached out to her, but she kicked off her shoes and slid down into the water. A minute later, she scrambled up the rocks, carrying a dream boat.

I'm going to re-light it when it dries.

What if the person who made it doesn't want his dream anymore?

Dreams are all I have.

