

Seascape

by Gita M. Smith

They had been wintering on the Cape under gunmetal skies for a month, just as they'd always done since falling in love.

What was that now, 40 years? Forty-one?

Lou said he was tired of deserted beach walks and the thin fare on the menu at Maxie's. He needed to go back to the city, anyway, on business.

Just a few days.

Elana loved the coast in winter, its dunes under frost, the burnished browns of sea oats, all of which she would paint when she regained the use of her right arm.

That's what she told the Hagans and the Erlichs when they stopped by, as usual, for Sunday four o'clocksies.

The stroke had aged Elana immeasurably, had left her right side slack, her vision and her speech impaired.

Lou and she both knew: There would be no painting in her future, nor walking on the beach, not soon. Not ever.

That is why she stayed behind, and that is why he left her there, the lightweight Ruger within reach.

