

# Who Drew The Ocean In The Palm Of Their Hands?

by Jennifer Donnell

My pepper haired neighbor asked to read a story I wrote... and I let her. *You're such a romantic*, she wrote in the margins, with her bubbly sorority handwriting. She's not a writer, herself, or she would have known that being called a 'romantic' is an insult. I want to be deep, dark, penetrating, or witty. Romance is sticky with fluff and goes down like cotton candy- always an unwanted residue left behind. *I don't want to write about love anymore*, I insisted, sipping at the tea she demanded I drink, a spoonful too sweet. She nodded and suggested the ocean- *Yeah, why not write about that?* She opened the blinds to the view that only the top story of her house can see.

I listened to the *click, clack* of her slippers heading back downstairs. Like a good student, I did write about the ocean- her ocean, as viewed through the glass. It was blue, I lied, to hide the symbolism of it being grey. Perhaps grey would imply I was ill-content with my soul. Instead, I called it blue and she liked what I wrote so much, that she asked me to draw a picture. She would place it near the window and look for that exact view- perhaps in the morning, after tea, like the tea that we'd just drunk.

I came back the next day. I drew the ocean in charcoal and sprinkled glue and sugar for the mist and waves.

She observed my finished product- suddenly an art critic, opposed to a meddling neighbor. Insightfully, she pointed out that the waves were drawn like a woman's hips were held open to the hands of her lover. The glue implied their bond, she went on... while the sugar was the fact that I must still think love is sweet, despite appearances

to the contrary. Suddenly, I was looking at my body in the hands of a lover, my very own thighs reaching toward his, our lips undoing the ribbons on my dress. It was pornography. I covered it with my hands and told her I'd remove it at once.

But she liked it. She even placed it in her bathroom, right of the tiled sink. People often ask about it- *Who drew that woman and her lover, their bodies wet within the waves, mouths agape, sugar dripping across their glistening form? Who drew the ocean in their palm of their hands?*

