

Magdalena

by Tom Allman

Magdalena followed the receding tide, her tiny feet leaving no rumors in the hard sand. She gathered only the most beautiful shells and presented them to her waiting Abuela. Her grandmother told her that the only things that a woman truly owns are her dreams. She told her that she should lock her dreams in the shells and hide them under her bed.

When Magdalena showed the first signs of becoming a woman her parents started their negotiations. Her father was a landowner and had several head of cattle; there were many suitors. Magdalena sat in her room, with her shells, wondering at the commotion.

The morning of her wedding Magdalena's Mother and Grandmother explained what her duties would be. Magdalena excused herself, retrieved the hatchet from the hearth, and went into her room. The older ladies heard a gentle sobbing then the crash of hatchet on conch and chambered nautilus. Wiping away the last tears of a little girl, she stridently emerged and announced that she was ready to be a good wife.

