

# Your Stories



*Welcome to Your Stories, a new feature in The Rambler. We often come across provocative art here at the magazine and wanted to share some of these pieces in a unique way. So in each issue we will include writing from our readers as inspired by artwork we provide. Our hope is that these images will provide launchpads for unbridled flights of imagination. Our first image, Irish Life Ring by Diana Parrish, has its own clear beauty: a meeting of water and sky and more than just a little hope of rescue and salvation. Or, that's how we see it, anyway. The wonderful thing about art is its shape-shifting talent to mean many different things to many different people. We hope you enjoy these stories and find your own imagination taking flight itself.*

—Ed.

Like a horse, she had a mane.  
She could buck. Once, she cracked  
the meadow's placid face in half.  
Yes, the dirt has an expression.  
Oh, yes, she drove the nails  
into each iron shoe by herself.  
She was not one to sit still  
and iron won't float.  
Water like skin, clouds  
like a cluster of gods or clowns,  
tumbling unnoticed above us  
since we were six.  
With slick skin, love entered  
like the tip of new clippers.  
Not even a nicker to the fish  
swimming the length of her legs,  
nudging the comforting dark  
of her wither, submerged.  
Even her hair is hushed.  
She was a trained and beautiful  
beast: rodeo, circus, race,  
but all that lingers now  
is a ring.

*Stacey Fruits  
Tucson, Ariz.*

Our cruise ship had docked at Ephesus, Greece, where we spent a few hours marveling at the ancient temple of Artemis. Returning to the liner, we were lost in thought and talk as we walked along a wide dock. A sudden gust of wind came up, snatched my straw hat off my head and plunked it into the water, where the current took it under the cement dock and out of sight.

I felt more than awful—the hat was the perfect size, shape, color, and flattering, and I had another two weeks of Mediterranean sun to deal with. If only it had a string attached to it!

After a few minutes the hat appeared on the other side of the dock, floating out to sea. I ran to our ship, asked an officer if he had a long pole. By the time he got one, the hat was out of reach. We gestured to three men in a fishing boat tied up at the pier—touched my head, pointed out to sea. They nodded and seemed to understand but by the time they untied their craft and rowed out, the hat had started to sink. One of the men reached over and plucked it out of the water. Eureka! They sped back to where we were enthusiastically giv-

ing “thumbs up” signs and applauding, handed it back to me, and adamantly refused the monetary reward my husband offered.

The straw dried quickly. It still sits firmly on my head whenever the sun shines.

*Nonfiction  
Evelyn Barrow  
Pittsboro, N.C.*

The morning is gray and still, Jewell Island barely visible through the shallow mist hanging over the lake. Countless droplets of water, heavy dew, cling everywhere. The air smells freshly scrubbed, like springtime. Not unusual for early May.

A small crowd gathers on the beach. Most of them, the town's curious, arrived at dawn and now mill around drinking coffee. Behind them stretches the weed-covered lawn of the old Miller place, in disrepair since the old man's death a few months ago. The house was once grand, always lively during the summer when the Miller kids were young. Mr. Miller made it his year-round residence after his wife died but neglected it and now the place resembles the proverbial haunted house. The dock, clinging desperately to the shoreline, is missing several slats and lists to the right. It looks unsafe.

Along the water's edge, a rowboat bobs as the water slaps the shore. A group of men in wetsuits stand nearby. They murmur among themselves, probably planning their next move. A loud chugging erupts and a bulky State Police boat rounds the corner of the lake near the old dock. Everyone looks up. This is no longer a rescue operation. It is now search and recovery. Little Eddie has been missing since yesterday morning.

I'm not one of the curious. I'm a reporter for the local paper and cover most everything that happens here; a missing six-year-old is the biggest story I've yet covered. I don't want to be here. I know, knew, Eddie Larsen. His parents threw a big “do” for his sixth birthday last November and my story about it made the Living section.

The public beach nearby, where lifeguards stand watch and food booths dispense pale hot dogs, is roped off. Nothing opens until Memorial Day, but a date on a calendar never stopped kids. School is still in session but they can sense summer. The front of the Miller house is an ideal spot to slip unnoticed into the lake for that first swim. *End of excerpt*