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# 400 STORIES PROJECT

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**The Fisherman**  
A Poem by Laura Plummer

Photo credit: Donald Teel

# The Fisherman

BY LAURA PLUMMER

The cellar has a fisherman, or so the neighbors say.  
He's only here four weeks a year; he never comes to stay.  
They send his letters to the house, addressed to unit D,  
which sit in bundles on the stoop when he goes out to sea.

His face is creased and leathered like a worn-out pair of shoes.  
He drinks away the endless days as he awaits the news  
that Cap'n's heading out again and gathering his crew.  
For now, he pours another pint and drowns himself in brew.

The job is in his blood, the only life he's ever known.  
A wife and kids were not to be, but he was not alone.  
The locals always welcomed him when he returned to shore.  
For thirty years he's fished these banks; he'll fish for thirty more.

A lively raconteur, the folks of Gloucester knew him well.  
And as he roamed from pub to pub, the stories he would tell  
of days of roping swordfish and harpooning raging whales.  
The people gathered at his side to hear his wild tales.

He now resides beneath the earth, unsatisfied on land.  
He's darkened all the windows in his castle made of sand.  
He hasn't got a visitor to bring him company—  
the Cape Ann gulls and cormorants his only family.

He won't emerge in daylight when the sun is in the trees  
or peek his head outside to feel the chilly autumn breeze.  
They say his silhouette is sometimes seen by lantern's light.  
You'll find him slowly passing like a ghost ship in the night.

The cellar has a fisherman, or so the neighbors say.  
He's only here four weeks a year; he never comes to stay.  
The cellar-dwelling fisherman is waiting for his call,  
a faded phantom sea dog who may not exist at all.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Plummer is an American writer and poet from Massachusetts. Her work has appeared in numerous print and online publications, including *The Sun* and *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Read more at [lauraplummer.me](http://lauraplummer.me).