

## The Birds: Mitch Contemplates His Cross-Cultural Marriage

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**Categories :** Fiction

**Date :** 07-02-2017

She refuses to serve eggs.

Family beach days often end with him folding the towels while she disappears into the sky. Try as he may, he cannot keep from reaching out to grab that glorious flash of brown.

At first the décor of saltwater drizzle and sand patches annoys him but then it provides comfort and a kind of affirmation.

Finding fresh fish every day is exhausting, almost oppressive. It is never right, however. Fresh is not the same as still living.

He-who-is-fully-human never thought he would pay such high seaside rent, or commute so far, to accommodate she-who-is-frequently-feathered. They must have a roof deck for launching purposes, and so they are in a dockside loft with exactly zero closets. People ask if they are artists.

What is worse: waiting for her to return home, or knowing that he can never provide a real nest?

Since there are no support groups, he consults folklore and fairy tales for guidelines. No story is ever quite right. He is stranded in the chilly realm of the underrepresented.

Having a child with her is pure joy. He watches his daughter and wonders when the feathers will appear. It is unfair but thrilling that she can dive and swim better than all the other children. He runs his finger over her nose, which is like her mother's, and therefore suggestive of a bill.

His pride is as large as the sea, for he alone has a wife like her, unfailingly buoyant, true to herself. Then comes the night when he sees his neighbor, smug and secretive, carrying a seal skin from his car to his front door. Just in time Mitch stops himself from leaning out the window and waving.

He lets the happy man enjoy his treasure.

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