

Outdoors Type

I am not what's called the outdoors type.
Oh, I played football and baseball
as a kid, ran three marathons
as an adult, but fishing never hooked
me. My old man took me out to local
holes a few times, but his idea of fishing
was to swill Schlitz while adrift
in a boat, and as a kid too young
to booze all I got out of our excursions
was sunburned. I married into a fishing
family, though. My father-in-law
drove us to Sunset Cove on the Oregon
Coast, stalked out on jetty rocks
with his son to cast into the sea.
I tagged along. Standing on a low
stone, I watched them fire
lines into green curls of surf.
My brother-in-law glanced
at me, grinned, nudged his
dad. My father-in-law grinned, too,
said: I wouldn't stand there, if I were you.
Why not? I asked. He shrugged, said:
I just wouldn't. His words struck
me as smug, so I didn't budge.
He turned away, hurled his hook
into the sea. I occupied my rock
for sixty seconds before a wave
broke over it, drenched my jeans
to the waist, filled my tennis shoes
with saltwater. My father-in-law
guffawed. My brother-in-law brayed.
I squished back to camp, never
went fishing with that family again.
I am not what's called the outdoors type.