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## How He Ran Aground

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One lobster trap hauled in  
the morning was empty,  
save the bottle of scotch  
rattling in the wire cage  
like an exhausted animal;  
he hesitated at the clasp,  
scowling at the horizon  
where white triangles  
sailed towards Bar Harbor;  
he'd heard about these trades:  
schooner moored off an island  
while the out-of-staters  
rowed towards a beach with  
piled driftwood ablaze,  
pot of "borrowed" lobsters  
balanced on plank seat  
of the dinghy like  
honored, kidnapped guests  
of well-dressed pirates;  
perhaps he would just  
take a closer look,  
read the scuffed label  
with a name like the sound of  
someone clearing their throat;  
aged thirty years,

which is how long ago  
he'd had his last drink,  
the outlines of Scottish hills,  
*braes*, on the label too,  
and he reflected how he  
escaped the thirst  
this many years by  
chasing the underwater  
hills of Penobscot Bay,  
lobsters sulking in dark,  
drowned valleys, thinking;  
which is what he didn't do  
when he placed the bottle  
in an honored position  
on the transom,  
then let it navigate,  
and then steer,  
until convinced that  
Butter Island was  
Great Spruce Head Island  
and he ran aground on a  
tombolo near Barred Islands,  
and thus jilted, donned his  
survival suit expectantly,  
as though dressing for a  
fancy ball with a girl  
named Destiny

with her hair up;  
the survival suit was orange,  
and perched on the stern rail,  
which became the highest  
point of the sinking boat,  
he looked like a piece of cheese  
on an hors d'oeuvres plate  
heading back to the kitchen,  
which is how the Coast Guard  
found him, sunrise searing the water,  
and the officer, taking notes and  
having been around the world,  
asked "What kind of scotch?"  
to which the lobsterman mused  
"An expensive one, I think,"  
later learning the cost was  
ten thousand dollars per bottle,  
boat repairs included.