**How It Will End**

We're walking on the boardwalk

but stop when we see a lifeguard and his girlfriend

fighting. We can't hear what they're saying,

but it is as good as a movie. We sit on a bench to find out

how it will end. I can tell by her body language

he's done something really bad. She stands at the bottom

of the ramp that leads to his hut. He tries to walk halfway down

to meet her, but she keeps signaling Don't come closer.

My husband says, "Boy, he's sure in for it,"

and I say, "He deserves whatever's coming to him."

My husband thinks the lifeguard's cheated, but I think

she's sick of him only working part-time

or maybe he forgot to put the rent in the mail.

The lifeguard tries to reach out

and she holds her hand like Diana Ross

when she performed "Stop in the Name of Love."

The red flag that slaps against his station means strong currents.

"She has to just get it out of her system,"

my husband laughs, but I'm not laughing.

I start to coach the girl to leave the no-good lifeguard,

but my husband predicts she'll never leave.

I'm angry at him for seeing glee in their situation

and say, "That's your problem—you think every fight

is funny. You never take her seriously," and he says,

"You never even give the guy a chance and you're always nagging,

so how can he tell the real issues from the nitpicking?"

and I say, "She doesn't nitpick!" and he says, "Oh really?

Maybe he should start recording her tirades," and I say

"Maybe he should help out more," and he says

"Maybe she should be more supportive," and I say

"Do you mean supportive or do you mean support him?"

and my husband says that he's doing the best he can,

that he's a lifeguard for Christ's sake, and I say

that her job is much harder, that she's a waitress

who works nights carrying heavy trays and is hit on all the time

by creepy tourists and he just sits there most days napping

and listening to "Power 96" and then ooh

he gets to be the big hero blowing his whistle

and running into the water to save beach bunnies who flatter him

and my husband says it's not as though she's Miss Innocence

and what about the way she flirts, giving free refills

when her boss isn't looking or cutting extra large pieces of pie

to get bigger tips, oh no she wouldn't do that because she's a saint

and he's the devil, and I say, "I don't know why you can't admit

he's a jerk," and my husband says, "I don't know why you can't admit

she's a killjoy," and then out of the blue the couple is making up.

The red flag flutters, then hangs limp.

She has her arms around his neck and is crying into his shoulder.

He whisks her up into his hut. We look around, but no one is watching us.

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