

*THE BOAT SINKS* adapted from

*BAILING OUT*

by Arthur M. Jolly

Seriocomic

Man (60's-80's)

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*Mr. Niebold, an elderly man in a hospice ward for the terminally ill, tells his young nurse why he won't take his meds.*

NIEBOLD

We backed off, as I said, and this feller stood up in his little rowboat, and he wrapped that chain around his leg, and his body, even put a loop over his shoulders. He din't want to ever get washed up, you understand, which happens. Then he saluted. Jimmy the cook - he was a vet, and he shot one right back like they was on parade. Then the guy sits down, takes out that gun, and puts a neat shot right through the transom. I din't want to look at the next bit, but somehow... I think, that is, we all felt like we *owed* it to him. Mebbe the Cap'n backed us off a little more so we would't have to see too much... I think that over, sometimes. Anyways, he put the gun up inside his mouth, and pulls the trigger.

(beat)

Didn't go off. He tried again. Mebbe the gun jammed, or his powder got wet. Sometimes, I wonder if mebbe he only had one bullet. His boat was already down at one end, and he started backin' up, to stay out of that icy water. Then he looks at us, and he starts bailin'. Bailin' with both hands, trying to scoop that water outta there faster than it was comin' in. 'Bout as much use as a clown with one of them confetti buckets - cause... 'cause it was kind of funny, in a way. I

mean, we weren't none of us laughin, we was trying to get her turned around and over to him in time, but there weren't no chance a' that. We wasn't but halfway when his boat went under, and he was gone like a rock.

(beat)

I don't mean funny, cause it was a man's death, and it weren't funny at all. But every now and then, I look back, and think about all his plannin', and him there, the middle of the goshdarn ocean, with his nekkidness just hangin' out in the breeze, ownin' nothin', owin' nothin', just him and the sea and the world, and a boat with a hole in it that he'd put there his-self, and... that's what happened.

(beat)

You gotta keep bailin'. Tied to cement, your hands numb from ice water, and ready to put a bullet in your head from the cancer pain, it don't matter. When the boat goes down, you bail it out.

(he hands her the pills)

I ain't gonna take my meds no more, Nurse Lauder. I don't wanna sleep. Don't wanna feel *nothin* - I'll take the pain.

END OF MONOLOGUE.