

## **The Square of the Sailors Brides - Piazza Spose dei Marinai**

This is a place that is very dear to me, I feel at home.

When I am sad or worried, I come here to clear my mind. I come to clean any bad and painful thoughts, through the feeling and the scent of freedom and serenity. The expanse of the sea, the seagulls.

This is the western side, where everything seems quieter with less activity. However, from here you can also see the other part of the port, the busier side.

This area was redeveloped in 2005, when the gates in the port were built to protect Cesenatico from storm surges.

Before that it was an expanse of sand, and a communal free beach.

When I was a child, my mother always brought us here on her Ciao moped. Me standing in front, my brother sitting behind. It was a carefree time of games and Sandwiches with Nutella.

The statue represents a sailor's wife with her children. The women came here to wait for their husbands, to watch the horizon, to scrutinize it if their boat would appear in their sights.

We also came with our mother, waiting for the return of my father on stormy days, when the fishing boats had not returned. He was a captain with a great sense of responsibility towards his fellow workers. In Cesenatico the shipowners are often families of fishermen, like mine.

There are generations of fishermen in my family, my grandfather, my uncles, and my father. During May to December, it was tuna fishing season, and they would be at sea for weeks, all together in the same boat. A boat that we waited for and that we could also sense its arrival, even before seeing the distinctive red band on its side. It was something inexplicable, we would all feel it: "Yes, it's them!"

We would watch the fishing boats enter the port moving very slowly, loaded with tuna that made them sail even slower. The sailors were exhausted with fatigue,

their skin baked by the sun and with long beards. However, if they had managed to fish well the tiredness would seem to disappear and the tuna were unloaded from the boat with ease.

They would come home for a shower and then leave immediately again for sea, hoping to spot another shoal.

At home there was an indescribable smell, which hovered in the air and which I connect to my childhood: a mixture of fish, of my father's scent, and of cigarettes.

He'd left and gone back to sea, but the smell stayed with us.

Today, when my brother returns from the sea, I think back to those days. The smell still stays with us.

Yet this is a place of serenity, where I can breathe, despite the moments of anguish.

A place that has always been part of me and that I will always come back to find again.

To be precise, it is the sound of the waves crashing on the shoreline that brings me back here: I sit beyond the statue and stay, watching the sea.

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