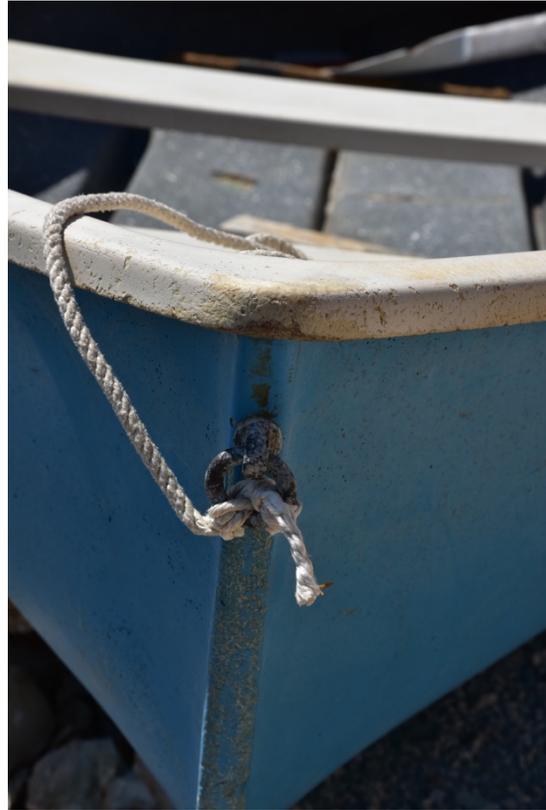


The Story of a Little Boat

The baby-blue and snow-white combination was instantly in harmony with the rocks and sea that surrounded it. I never knew its history, but I knew it was little and powerful. It had done more work than any of its contemporary, extravagant competitors. Into its slight frame, it welcomed building materials, laborers, a family of five and anything else it was required to transport that would help build an entire home

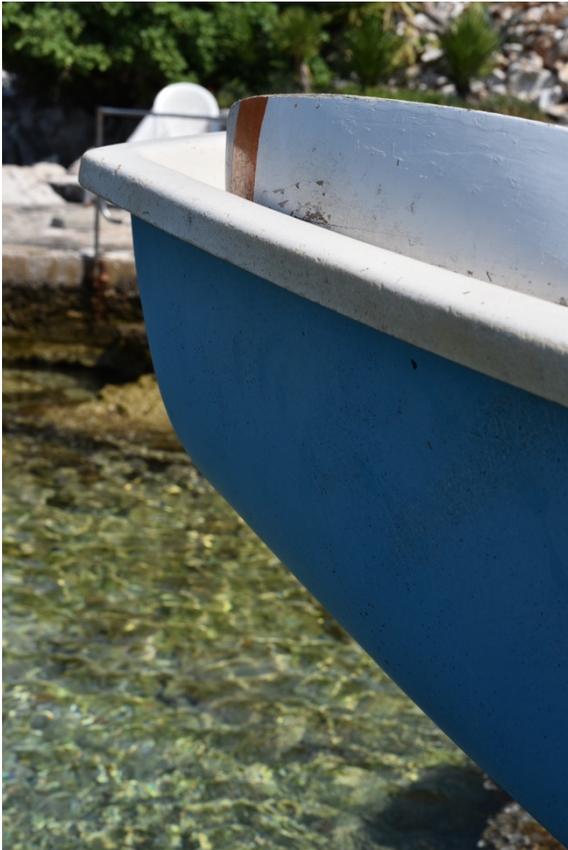


by the sea. It never relinquished to the harshness of time, even though it wasn't maintained or cared for. Although it once had a motor, it readily waived its speed for the unity

and love of its oars gently and rhythmically intersecting the sea. The near-silence of its seamless movement, coupled with the comforting, steady creak of its oars allowed it to glide gracefully across the sea. Similar to the *Giving Tree*, one day, it met a blonde, curly-haired girl. And I am certain, it loved that little girl as much as the little girl loved it.



According to my father, when I was only a few years old (exactly 2 years and 1 month in this photo), he believed in me and that little blue and white boat so much that he allowed me to row in the Adriatic Sea, alone. He taught me how to place the oars; he taught me how to use them so they cut into the sea at just the right angle; he taught me how to get in and out; and he taught me to respect, not only the sea, but also this little boat with no name.



As I grew, we went on many adventures together through calm and tumultuous seas. Quite clearly, I remember a day when I feared I wouldn't be able to row back with my younger brother and sister because the winds and the sea had grown angry very quickly. Staying close to the shore but far enough away to avoid becoming a part of it, we were guided home safely by my mighty little boat. In my heart I knew he, this little boat, would take care of me. I knew because I was with him, I was safe.

He and I rowed and explored every summer that I

was able to visit our beach house in Croatia. He had become an extension of me. This summer, for the very first time, he met my husband and my girls. He embraced them, welcomed them, gave them the best of himself, even though he was getting old and his bow and starboard were cracked, as were his oars, which had long replaced his original ones. But he was there for me, to take my family anywhere I wanted to go. And I knew, we were always safe.

I don't remember a time when I did not have a love of boats—little boats, not the polished, lavish yachts millionaires raced across the Adriatic to display their power



and wealth. When I was little, one of the neighbors in the cove gave me the nickname “mornarica,” little sailor girl. I wore that title with pride for there was no place I was happier than in and on the Adriatic Sea. It had to come to pass that one day my three girls would be introduced to this special part of my life. It was this summer, that they began their love story with the little blue and white boat that had once carried their mother when she was a little girl.



Being born in Split, as you take your first breath into the world, with it comes the scent and love of the Adriatic. It's impossible to escape, nor would you want to. You are immediately and forever a part of Split, its people, its coast and its sea. Never will you deny it, no matter where you live, how far away you are or how long you are gone. If the distance is unbearable, you are comforted with the songs born of this region, which forever speak to your soul and bring your heart back home. They are your connection to the people and your country, until you return once more. And as the music captures our hearts, photographs and art capture our souls and help us remain home when we truly are so far away.

This year, I decided to pay tribute to my little boat. He never had a name. He was just of me, I of him, and we together, of the sea. I wished to preserve him in time through photographs.

My love of this little boat and all old, perhaps not so perfect or polished vessels of the sea took me on a poetic, photographic journey. They led me to boats of the past. They are the ones that have secrets and stories to tell. They are conveyors of our past and our future as they physically carry us, emotionally lift us, spiritually bring us closer to the beauty of God's touch. They leave us with memories to be cherished for a lifetime or even longer as they cross that bridge of generations... Until they can simply go no more.

In unison

Take me through your enchanted seas
Whisper to me, your secret stories
Carry me to the seagull's shores
As I listen to the music of your creaking oars

We glide in unison, seamlessly
We hide in the camouflage of the rocks and sea
I am of you and you of me
My little boat of the Adriatic Sea

My hands cover your wooden oars
As the world, in unison, we easily ignore
No chaos can penetrate the row
Or the peace that you selflessly bestow

My hands now aging
My endurance gently fading
In unison, a protest against time we are staging
But my memories as young as the day they came to be
Forever it is just you, my little boat and me
Silently... Effortlessly... Harmoniously... Peacefully...
Rowing in unison, with you, through the blue Adriatic Sea



Boats: A Photographic Tale



