

1995

## Anthem of Governor's Bay

Jamey Hein  
*Denison University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hein, Jamey (1995) "Anthem of Governor's Bay," *Exile*: Vol. 42 : No. 1 , Article 22.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.denison.edu/exile/vol42/iss1/22>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Denison Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Exile by an authorized editor of Denison Digital Commons.

---

## Anthem of Governor's Bay

I often believed that my greatest power was the worldly knowledge you lent me in my youth. It assured me that my life might prosper out of Governor's Bay. Now the tide creeps away from those summers of hurried talks on the hot docks of the bay, and becomes faded like the teak of an antiqued yacht.

Across the inlet, a stately mansion was built. It stared into the sound, and often the land marked itself for drunken navigators. It was here where you and your wife threw Gatsby-style galas, inviting club members and island folk from the Gold Coast communities of Eaton's neck, Quogue, and East Hampton. I watched from my launch boat as couples mingled their ways across the pristine lawn to where you and Mrs. Faircloth sipped dry Martinis and greeted with unnatural hugs. Later, you discussed your hatred for those well-dressed events. You told me about your youth, and an October afternoon at Yankee Stadium, sitting high in the nickel seats when you caught a ball barehanded from the legendary 'Mick' during his final games in the Bronx. Your memories of youth were precious. You never spoke of your wife, except when she refused to join you during your afternoon hunts for Bluefish off the banks of the island. She called it mundane; sitting hours in a fishing chair, beer in hand, waiting to reel in finned seafood. I was fourteen when you called your wife's name as you stood on the afterdeck of your yacht, and triggered your life away.

\*\*\*\*\*

You spoke to me only on the weekends when you arrived with your long-haired Sheepdog named Beaches; both of you awaiting your delivery to Insanity. He occasionally perched himself on the bow of my launch, as I throttled an Evinrude fifteen horse through the harbor, dodging the wakes of larger seacraft. Governor's Bay was nested in the banks of the Connecticut River, which emptied itself into the Long Island Sound across from Montauk Point. It was my home and yours. The harbor ran deep into the coast, turning itself into a fresh water river within five miles of the pebbled shoreline. Governor's was the home of fresh and wealthy executives and old money families. Its beaches were occupied by lavish whitewashed weekend cottages that could have been used as year round palaces. Yours was on a bluff, where white waves crashed against the jagged rocks below your lawn. It was a weathered mansion with forest-colored awnings, wrapping around the veranda that was blanketed by towering oaks.

My father restored an '81 Boston Whaler and made it into a launch boat. He crafted a cushioned seat that curved around the body of the boat with plenty of space for sailbags, coolers, graying fathers, and their pampered daughters. On both sides, was the name Harbor Son, painted delicately with a deep red glossy paint. It was designed to hold a much larger outboard than the small Evinrude motor mounted to the stern, but harbor police enforced a no wake zone on all boats. My job required me to bring families, young couples, and fish-hearty men to their moored boats in the harbor. I made most of my money through tips handed down to me from the teaked decks of Hatterases, Chris Crafts, Bertrams, and various modern sloops. At sundown I collected

---

my passengers from those floating pavilions, and brought them to a dock by the clubhouse, where they discussed their latest Caribbean adventures over a bottle of Chardonnay.

Yours was a fifty-two foot Grand Banks, white with a navy blue hull. Insanity was nestled in between smaller vessels, making it appear royal and important. The flying bridge shot skyward, and had a sophisticated panel of controls which you controlled to maneuver her on your escapes to Block Island and the Vineyard. It was this passionate boat which lured you away from your home atop the bluff, and gave you a delicate feeling of youth.

I picked you up on the lee side of your home, where a jetty calmed the water, and created a small inlet. Every Saturday at ten. That was the routine. You boarded and bellowed a huge welcome with Beaches by your side, tongue out and tail wagging. He loved the salt in the air.

"Graham, my boy. How's business? Right on time. Hear anything this morning? Anything 'bout the blues bitin'?"

"Ah...yeah. Some guys out at Lighthouse Point said they were really snappin' all morning. "Round eight or so. Don't think you'll have any trouble, Mr. Faircloth. Ya always know where they're hiding out."

"Hope so, my boy. Really hope so. Rough week in the city, son. Need to get a little r 'n r. Don't you get caught in that nine to five crap. Ain't worth your time. Get out into that country, smell the mountain breezes. Heck you're what...fifteen? Ahh, what I'd give... Best years of your life, Graham. Best damn years."

"Actually, fourteen, sir. Wouldn't mind going to college someday. Somewhere. I don't know."

"Nothing beats an education, son. But you get your best just from livin' everyday. Being happy by being yourself. That's what it's all about."

"Yeah...well, I guess so."

Together, we cruised through the harbor, the crisp breeze rattling masts and main sheets, stewing them in the silence of the morning hours. I asked about your plans; the travels you intended to make with Insanity after the summer months passed, alone. You mentioned how tempting the Maine coast was in early autumn as the maple leaves turned a brilliant auburn; the trees draping over the inlets of Bar Harbor and Portland. You told me your independence was a rare privilege after marriage; that every once in a while you needed a dose of privacy, away from Governor's Bay, separate from your home atop the bluff.

We stopped by Bruce's Bait 'n Tackle so that you could pick up fresh chum, and maybe tray a new lure. I brought you to Insanity and helped you aboard the elegant yacht, and waited for my return commands. I wondered where Mrs. Faircloth was, and why she didn't keep you company on those day long travels, but you seemed satisfied by yourself.

"Well, I'm off, my boy. Gonna catch some rays, gonna catch some game fish. Have a good one, son. Don't spend too much of that cash, save a little." Once aboard, you always chuckled and cracked a beer, then waved me off.

"Thanks, Mr. Faircloth. We'll see ya around six, and don't worry, I'll be on time."

---

"Ya always are Graham, ya always are."

I was relieved in the middle of the day as boats began to empty out of the basin and retreat into the sound. I often fell asleep with the sun and salt around me, tied to a cleat on the gas dock, meditating silently as the sun beat into my skin. This routine continued until the sun banked the water, calming it with tranquil waves and slow incoming boats. The harbor was a nightly cradle for coastal traffic, sailors and yachtsmen heading north toward the summer races in Newport and vacationers on their way to the islands. Insanity crept into the bay, signaling with red and green bow lights. The entry of the yacht was overwhelming as she slipped by much smaller boats, boats with names like Sweet Pea and Hot Tuna. Names that were suddenly forgotten after each passing.

You navigated your boat back to its mooring with a special finesse. Sometimes, you held your blues like a man holds a new born, gently across his veined arms, showcasing them, I climbed aboard and marveled at your trophies, gasping as a half dozen fish swam within the holding tank.

"Ya see anything you like, son? Had a good day out there. Hot, but decent. They were really jumpin' today, just like ya said. Good job, my boy. Damn good job."

"I bet they were, Mr. Faircloth. Man, ya caught yourself some biggies."

"Take your pick, son. Any fish ya want. You deserve it. Being out here must drive ya crazy. Ain't life grand, Graham? Ain't nothing better then a day at sea, kicking back on the fighting chair. Reeling 'em in. Ahh... makes me feel young, ya know?"

"I guess so, sir. But I can't take your blues. You were out all day pulling 'em in. You worked hard for those."

"Ahh, I work hard everyday son. This ain't work, this is play. It's what makes life worth living. Out here, nothing goes wrong. Ya notice that, son? Go ahead, take one home. Getcha your mother to skin it for dinner tell her it's for all her boy does for me. All the days he spends dragging me 'round."

"Yeah...I guess so, sir. Well, thanks. Thanks a lot!"

You rewarded me with simple gestures like these, always with a grin and a hint of appreciation.

I awaited the weekends when I could rest from those exhausting days, and listen. You explored windless inlets, where you read Hemingway in peace, alone. You told me about the races in Newport and the graceful sloops which sliced through the Atlantic. You boasted about pulling in a Mako shark off the east side of Nantucket, when you fought for two hours, only resting for a few sips of beer. I opened my eyes wide and child-like when you described its size. Five feet, three inches. It measured my height at fourteen. I felt safe in this harbor with you, and me, barefoot and bleached, standing as the sunlight fades this enchanted Connecticut village.

Early September pushed weekend travelers back to their home ports along the east coast of New England. Summer people headed home, leaving their cottages, and returned to the rhythm of life of Manhattan or Boston. They left the salt of the sound and the cries of seagulls for the stench of city life. You told me it may be your last summer at Governor's Bay, that your wife needed a new scenery, a new ocean to stare at while she drank her morning tea. Labor Day was the last time I picked you up on the lee side of your home, and taxied you and Beaches to Insanity. You mentioned your wife being

---

busy with the caterers, and her preparation for your Labor Day gathering, but you said nothing else. I returned a dusk and heard you cry her name, but found you lying, clenching a pistol with fresh blood saturating the teak of your Grand Banks. In your other hand, you held a note which read "My youth is eternal. I simply...lived."

\*\*\*\*\*

After seven years I come back as a young man who dreams beyond that summertime harbor. The opening line of my graduation speech read, "A humble man once told me there is a feeling of eternity in youth." I stood in an ivy filled quad and tried to capture your spirit with these words. Later I marched to Pomp and Circumstance with the Green Mountains surrounding, entering a feared adulthood. My professors spoke in white classrooms about the dimensions of a novel, Breugel's satirical paintings, and Pavlov's discovery about dog saliva, but no one had mentioned this phrase to me. I sought you as a mentor, someone whose charmed talks were worth more than a tip received on the fueling dock during a scorched 4th of July. A week before that summer's end I watched you die from a skiff you traveled on with me as your launchboy, with me as your friend.

*Jamey Hein '96*