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Pink Salmon Sandwiches

by Helen Fallon

She picks tiny bones from pink salmon,
watches butter melt into warm scones,
shines tea spoons, lays doyleys
on the pure white table cloth
she crocheted late at night.

Tyres crunch on gravel, engine purrs,
then pauses. She quickly unlocks the door,
their weekly ritual begins once more.
They talk of local things, meat factory closure,
Saint Teresa's bones on tour,
the parish pilgrimage to Lourdes.
Sandwiched and sconed, China cup refilled - twice,
he rises, says the scones were grand.
She presses a five pound note, a mass offering,
into his blue-veined hand.

When he is transferred, she misses him,
wonders who makes his pink salmon sandwiches.
Years later, she sees him, on the *Six One News*,
hears about the money paid for silence,
feels the bile of fish rise in her tightening throat.