**Casper’s Galleon**

by Dettra Rose

Casper’s mum, Marina, was tall and skinny as a mast. Shoulders wide, hips narrow. As she walked, she swayed like a majestic galleon on the waves. Pale hair billowing, canvas sails. Casper and his mum read pirate stories and made sailing ships from wood and string.

But he blushed when she collected him from school. Kids teased she should live in a harbour or port. He reddened with shame. At home, she told Casper he’d grow up different, too.

He packed a rucksack and bought a train ticket to the last stop. Tiny sparks lit silver tracks. At his destination, kids were roller-skating and doing stunts on bikes.

They asked, ‘What cool thing can you do?’

Casper shrugged and retrieved a pirate ship from his bag.

They said, ‘Does that sail?’

‘Yes, she does.’

At the pond, Casper whooshed his ship into the water. It wobbled, then tipped over. Casper almost cried. Then, it straightened and glided like a galleon on high tides.

‘That’s so cool,’ the kids said. ‘Can you show us how to make one?’

When Casper got home, he cuddled into his mum’s heartbeat. Later, he opened her bedroom door and there it was. The open sea.

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