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## Lake Traunsee

*By Alyson Miller*

The suitcase washes up first, on a Monday, its grey blue skin scudding onto the shorelines of Lake Traunsee. It contains the purple white parts of a wife with no name, chopped parcel-small and bundled into the travel bag that used to hold old towels frayed by the scrape of wet bodies and the metal belly of the washing machine. Opened by tourists, the sodden flesh of her torso is newly alive with water worms and crabs as pale and pink as fingernails. On Tuesday, divers emerge with a husband of no name, whose limbs are woven around baggage knotted tight to ankles and wrists in a caricature of an octopus or bladderwrack weed. Hanging from the right shoulder, wrapped in a cool slate casing of concrete, is the head of his wife. A rope screwed into the outer shell, she draggles like a Christmas bauble or treat, an imperfect Siamese twin. In the folklore of Salzkammergut, a region whose sound echoes the cut and choke of Seppuku, legends tell of a hippocamp ridden by a grieving mermaid; a lake monster tied to a beautiful suicide, or the reverse. In the cases anchoring his body to the silt and mud of the waterbed, forensics find a pulpy mess of letters, a bag of baby teeth and needle-thin fish bones, and the soft ears of a knitted yellow bear.