

Excerpt from Lea Wait's
LIVING AND WRITING ON THE COAST OF MAINE

Celebrating October 28: A Love Story

My husband, Bob Thomas, and I have been married twelve years. Practically newlyweds, considering our (sh!) ages. But, of course, there's a story behind every marriage. Our story began April 1, 1968. (Yes. April Fools' Day.)

We were both young college graduates working in the same office in lower Manhattan, a block from where the World Trade Center was being built. I came from Maine and New Jersey. Bob was born in the Bronx but grew up in Beirut, Lebanon, where his father worked. (He often says if you were born anywhere in the United States in the twentieth or twenty first centuries, you've used up all the luck a person deserves. He's seen refugee camps.)

We both loved talking about politics and books over wine and cheese. He was recently married. We became friends as well as colleagues.

Three years later he took the photographs at my wedding.

Mine was a short-lived marriage, and, as it turned out, so was his. After both our marriages were over, we fell in love. Maybe we'd loved each other before that.

But our dreams weren't headed in the same direction. I'd decided to adopt children, and my job tied me to the New York/New Jersey area. Soon my mother moved in with me for a few months each year. And then longer. She and Bob didn't get along.

Bob was restless; he accepted jobs in zip codes far and wide. He got to know my growing family when his work took him to New York. He'd stay a year or two, but then leave, off on

another job; another possibility. We loved each other, but we didn't love the lives the other had chosen.

My four daughters grew up. By the time they were out of high school, Bob and I weren't in touch. I continued caring for my mother. I left corporate life, moved to Maine, and began writing full-time, as I'd always dreamed I would.

I didn't know Bob had left his job to care for his mother. After she died of pancreatic cancer he married. In a horrible irony, two months after his mother's death his wife was also diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She died seven months later.

Two years later, a short email: "Where are you? How are you? Thinking about you," brought us together again.

Six months later my mother died. A year after that Bob and I went quietly to the Town Hall in Wiscasset, Maine, and were married. It was 12,994 days after we'd first met.

Now Bob is painting. I'm writing. We both love living in Maine and being grandparents. We still talk politics and books over wine and cheese. Finally, our dreams have taken us down the same path.

Happy anniversary, my dearest husband. You, and this life we've made together, were worth waiting for.