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Fishing

When I was a young boy, I stayed during the summer with my grandparents. They lived in a house in Michigan next to a small lake named Lake Cora, so I spent my summers swimming and fishing. Swimming I loved. Fishing was the problem because I loved my grandfather, but he liked to go fishing at night. Out in the boat on Lake Cora with my grandfather I would cast my lure, and usually my line would become tangled. I would spend minutes untangling my line only to cast my lure again and tangle my line again. As you might imagine, I didn't catch any fish, and because it was night and dark and cold, I also got tired. Fishing with my grandfather, whom I loved, was no fun, but then my cousin Norma, who was years older than I, invited me to go fishing in the morning.

It was cold like the night, but there was sunlight. I could see my line when it tangled, and Norma helped me. She showed me where to cast my lure, and she helped me when I screamed and my pole bent over until its tip touched the water. I had hooked a bass, the biggest fish I had ever seen, the biggest fish I had ever caught. The bass was over two feet long and pulled so hard that I thought my line would break. But Norma helped me that day, and when my grandmother cooked that fish in the evening, my grandfather smiled and told me that it was the best bass he had ever tasted.

When I grew older, I moved away from Michigan. My grandparents passed away. And I forgot about fishing until one day I heard that Norma, whom I had not seen since that summer we went fishing, had died. Cancer, I was told, was the cause. She was only 35. And I remembered Norma and the bass that almost broke my line and the cold morning when I was no more than seven or eight when we caught that bass together on the best fish-day of my life.