



*Futomaki: Hand Roll*  
By Richard Rivers ([richard\\_rivers@hotmail.com](mailto:richard_rivers@hotmail.com))

There was no mistaking it - the sounds and smells from the kitchen were of Maki hard at work preparing sushi for my dinner. She always did that after

we had quarreled, when she was ready to make up. And I knew that before long, right after dinner, she would pull out the futon and we would make love, she with a fierce kind of determination, as if catching up on the days or weeks we had missed.

On the stove, string beans and slivered carrots simmered in fish stock. Kanpyo, the long stringy dried gourd, was soaking in warm water. An omelet, thin as cigarette paper and lightly brown on one side, lay on a plate sliced into thin strips.

Over dinner, I stared at her so long that the miso settled to the bottom of my small bowl - the muddy bottom of a tiny clear pond. Her eyes were absolutely pure and completely impenetrable. Her soft lips were sensuous, forming words in pleasure or in anger. It didn't seem to matter that evening - I promised myself never to become angry with her again.

A kiss with a hint of wasabi on her pointed, flitting tongue. Breasts, with their hard little nubs, tasting of sandalwood and spice. Below, the flavor of mild sweet vinegar, of dashi, the broth made from little ocean fish - a woman's subtle musk.

The sheets of nori crackled over the flame, releasing their flavor. With practiced ease, she assembled it all on her little bamboo mat and rolled it up. Our eyes met as she grasped it - while the deft wringing motion of her soft hands sealed it into a firm, tight roll. She smoothed it out - rolling it back and forth between flattened palms.

And then a surprise. Rice balls - my favorite. I always ate them sprinkled with furikake, a mixture of crushed seaweed and spices that comes in little packets. Maki brought a bunch of it home from Japan with her because she knew how much I loved it.

There was exactly enough rice left for two, and she gave me her most knowing smile as she slowly, softly squeezed and formed the two egg-sized balls. But when I reached for the furikake, her hand lightly darted out and stopped me. Grasping the little foil packet herself, Maki's eyes never left mine as she gently tore it open with her teeth.

Fin

Richard Rivers

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