

A day's walk in the fog
 Staggering between stream dogfish
 Abandoned by fishermen
 Their eyes black, hollow
 Still starting out at the ocean
 As if, even in death,
 They ponder where they came from,
 They wonder where they're going.

Race Point

After work,
 When the dishes had been washed,
 The table cleaned and all of the food
 Eaten or stored away,
 We built a bonfire
 Between the dunes and the tide,
 Laughed away the darkness,
 Swam under starlight and moon glow,
 Slept to a lullaby of waves
 Punctuated by crackling, popping flames,
 Dancing like blue ghosts above the sand.
 We never worried about sharks then,
 Only the beach police, making their rounds.
 If we made it through the night,
 By morning it was all just smoke,
 Charred skeletons of pitch pine and driftwood,
 Glowing embers that matched the rising dawn.
 We drowned the evidence with seawater,
 Buried our skeletons under glacial scrape,
 Hid from the sun's glare in kitchens
 That fed the rich and famous,
 Scraping plates, rinsing glasses,
 Counting hours to the next
 Star-drunk moon-drugged sea-high.

Katama

Thirty years later
 The surf and the sand,
 The sun, the sea breeze, the scenes:
 Tanned, sinewy bodies of lifeguards and teens,
 Kids crabbing and sandcastle-building,
 Swells of surfers and body surfers and boogie boarders,
 Miles of swimmers and sailors and sun worshippers
 And the tree of us,
 Who once spent entire summers planted here,
 Alternating hours between waves and beach towels,
 Now shooting away the herring gulls,
 Their irritated squawks
 Mimicking our own frantic talk
 Lamenting lost times in sacred places –
 Termini's, Iggy's, The Sunnyside,
 The meatball and jukebox of Giro's Spaghetti House,
 Where strangers recognizing anyone at the bar
 Would order a round for everyone,
 Free drinks piling up like rocks on a cairn,
 In empty shot glasses turned upside down
 Languid beach days lapsing into blurry pub nights
 Pits of salty seawater ale sloshing in frozen mugs
 The clink of four quarters dropping into the slot
 Voices rising in the starless, moonless dark
 Singing "The Ballad of New Orleans,"

Narragansett

Beaches



Doug Norris

Horseneck

"If you listen carefully,
 You can hear the wind"
 Was the first poem I spoke –
 Uttered among dunes,
 Echoing wild waves,
 Amplified by emptiness,
 Resounding in the hollow
 Knobbed whelk of my ear.

I was just a boy,
 Seven years conscious,
 Scratching mysteries
 From driftwood and sand.

I did not know anything
 About poetry
 Until the night my father,
 Recalling my words,
 Tapped his typewriter,
 Clackety-clacking the keys,
 Transforming my line
 Into an enduring shape
 Made of windblown dunes.

Sankaty

The seal followed me,
 Keeping its distance
 Precisely angled 45 degrees,
 Watching from the waves
 While I walked the slanted sand
 To the lighthouse and back.
 Neither of us spoke
 Between glances and progress,
 Each of us content
 To merely indulge
 Our pleasures and curiosities.

Please recycle to a friend!

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Cover: View of Horseneck Beach
From the web

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Beaches

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