

The Devil Tides

There are rocks off the coast shaped like eggs. There are rocks shaped like misery and one like a skull. Bodies have washed up on the slippery barnacles at low tide. There is a brown island I can walk to from the crushed shell beach. If you are born up here, you know sadness and you know gulls. You know how a good clamshell makes a good ashtray. You know the land is as flat as any place where men change into wolves under the mutton moon. You know that. Resent everything, for it's the only way you don't forget. Resent everything you love, it keeps you anchored to the beach. Fishing boats bring in cargo from pink and white tulip fields in the Orient. The heroin is cheap and it is hot. Just past King's Beach the seaweed is red clogged with pennies or fingers. It smells even in the cold. Too many villages are connected by thin causeways pinched on either side by the Atlantic. Devil tides cut them off from the world. Folks go out and never come back. There are empty graves engraved in marble in big churches. Folks go out hot and turn blue. No one ever forgets, except how to measure. If you knew this, you'd never ask anything more of me.