



1987

## Florida Beach

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## FLORIDA BEACH

The old people come out early in the morning,  
    Ambling, shell-hunting on the beach;  
Poking at blue translucent balloons  
    Among the seaweed's tidal reach,  
Dead Portuguese men-of-war, a high moment  
    When nothing is expected.

Women wear sleeveless shirts, flabby arms,  
    Kerchiefs over their hair,  
They are the leaders at this time of day, of life,  
    "Such a gorgeous day! Smell the fresh air!"  
They command to their companion-followers,  
    Turning to lead with a purposeful stride.

Men wear nylon golf caps, cocked in recollection  
    Of going off to world wars;  
They were leaders then, their eyes reach out to sea,  
    Stomachs now hang in surrender, they smell of old cigars,  
Sandpipers running on their stick legs, nervous, afraid of everything,  
Sporty guys, wondering where they go to die.

Rex Mohlman