

For My Mother Who Has Never Been to Cape Cod

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Bayside, the water sluices in.
A clump of seaweed, frilled and green
as a woman's scarf washes ashore
in shallow furrows, as if from a recent wreck.

(Here you'll think only of that neck,
and how its drowning undid fashionable knots,
a daughter's neck, no doubt, taken to sea
with a good mother's fair warning).

The lighthouse tolls, its call companion
to the ceaseless thrum of water at ocean's end.
You'd note the ancient pilings that list off-shore,
their salt-bleached selves useless succor for the stranded.

No one has lived here forever.
They walk so far along the beach they disappear,
but not before they leave their shoes in the sea wall's shade
so certain are they of return.