

Shells

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today I walk a sullen beach
its sand a deep gray
had it once been white
or a light tan

a few shells lie scattered here and there
unbroken save for one shattered
one chipped
I do not know their names

a perfect one, butterfly shaped
each wing flared
banded white and medium brown
fills the palm of my hand

what had lived therein
a single being
adapted to the shell's shape
spread eagled

is as close as I can come
and I want to see
the butterfly inhabitant
sans shell sunbathing on colorless sand
in the universe next door