

Extremities

A thin wind coldly blows
Sand grit between the toes.
An isolated pool
Lies crystal clear and cool —
A seaside trinket box —
Transversed by jagged rocks
Where the débris settles.
Here the jelly petals
Of sea anemones twist
In ceaseless, hungry quest,
And a quaint collection,
Smoothed by water's friction,
Is heaped against the sides,
Static between the tides:
Shells' crenellated cones;
Delicate stick-like bones,
Stone white, of sea birds drowned;
Wafers of glass, rough ground,
Milk blue and pale sea green;
Piled pebbles shining clean.

The hand slides down the edge
Explores along a ledge . . .
Detached from miniature cliff
An infant starfish, with
Prehensile instinct, grips
The shrinking finger tips.
A vulnerable thing,
It cannot even sting.
And yet this fragile star
Spirals from eras far
Beyond that time when man's
Long journeyings began.

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