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## On a Beach in Southern Connecticut

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## ON A BEACH IN SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT

Gradually the monotony of his rhythms  
overwhelmed him, like the repetition of small waves  
on a beach in southern Connecticut.  
This had been good, a good; but moderation  
in excess, even the moderate luxury  
of a rocky coast, became, finally,  
one lesson in the same, old discipline:  
excess leading to wisdom, and what good is wisdom?

The circles superimposed themselves, the sun  
superimposed itself, on the same spot,  
in the same sky, the same, in all practicality,  
over the same beach. It was monotonous here  
and good; the tempo of the sun was a familiar  
tempo, but not a song to dance to.

Any change was needed. Almost any change.  
Pacification of the prairie land-wars,  
forgetting the skirmishes of cattlemen  
and sheepmen, and the insomniac coyote,  
had been effected on a furlough by the sea,  
a truce. War and a truce were the first lessons:  
not variations on a theme, but  
alternation of all the possible routines.

If only the sun would bloom again with blood  
he might intone a song with consonance.  
Or if it shrivelled into haggling  
inconsequence—as on a muggy day  
a gullish cacophony composes  
a rhapsody, for nerves teased into sympathy.

If only he could bring himself to sacrifice  
this peace to all that chintz. Of course, to be  
truly satisfied would be to forget  
one's disaffections, would be to forget  
the cult of satisfactions is a cult  
and to forget one had forgotten. To forget  
to anticipate. To be caught up  
in an expanding and contracting

—hunger. He had forgotten lunch  
and now it must be nearly half-past four.  
Gin and bitters: crackers, triscuit, sea biscuit:  
gouda, port salut, cheddar: braunschweiger:  
anchovies or smoked mussels: and then dinner.  
The old critique of heaven: no hunger. No stomach ache.  
No wisdom. Nothing.