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Coney Island

Stuart Friebert

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The beach. At the back, the sea to the horizon. To the right, a hotdog stand and some chairs with yellow paint on them. Dressed in my tiny new trunks I sit down, listen to the wind blow, rain come close as you stand by the water, whispering something to the man beside you. There now, I tell myself, wait till you’re told—I’m glad to see you out of doors, I yell.

By nightfall, I’m surrounded by a crowd of people who wonder why I’m speaking to the waves. No doubt because you’re gone. I move closer to the water now, the waves all hung with cobwebs. Except for a narrow passage: when I start through, I hear you calling.

It’s impossible to describe the dissatisfaction in the air. I back away, lose my shoe in the surf.