

Wendy Mitman Clarke

Beachcombing

The United Nations Environmental Programme estimated in 2006 that every square mile of ocean contains 46,000 pieces of floating plastic [causing] the deaths of more than a million seabirds every year, as well as more than 100,000 marine mammals.

—UNESCO

On the fine white beach

wandering, wading,

we find priceless treasure—

nerites, frog shells, blue sea glass

wandering, wading,

washing in with the tide,

nerites, frog shells, blue sea glass

pulled by the moon

washing in with the tide,

razors, balloons, water bottles

pulled by the moon,

baggies, microbeads, toothbrushes

razors, balloons, water bottles

carried by the waves,

baggies, microbeads, water bottles

drifting, floating

carried by the waves,

sea turtle, albatross

drifting, floating

bellies bloated

sea turtle, albatross.

We find priceless treasure—

bellies bloated

on the fine white beach.