

Winning Poems in 2020 CFCP, Inc., Annual Contest

3. Any Subject, Any Style, Second Place

**Along Drake's Beach**

They dissolve –  
tracks of ourselves in sand washed by ocean.  
Waves grab our paths, our footsteps,  
erasing our soft traces among washed-up shells.  
All shells, the remains, the final poems  
of creatures protecting their soft parts, like us –  
the wonder shell, living in amazement,  
the rosy harp, lost in its music,  
the fool's cap, serene in its ignorance,  
the telescoped dove, searching for interior hope,  
the spiral Babylon, confused in its tongues,  
the casket nassa, buried in itself,  
the matchless cone, thinking itself the summum bonum,  
the rough pen shell, working on drafts,  
the blood-stained sanguine, drenched in vendettas,  
the oblong trapezium, escaping its fate in geometry,  
the forked Venus, seductive and treacherous,  
the angel wing, surviving through holiness,  
the cat's-tongue oyster, mewing for pearls,  
the moon shell, living in mystery,  
the anomia, living without a name –  
all reaching down through spirals  
into their incurved birth, the shells  
we live in, twisted into our own final forms,  
protecting our soft parts, leaving our shells  
in the world to be wondered at,  
the whorled Janus gates,  
our own entrances and exits

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