



Jon Stone

Defeat

Defeat is your handler,
who lingers cloudishly at the edge of the beach
with gulls all about him.
And no matter how long you've idled here
or whether you've laid ingenious traps
or whether you've burnished sand into glass –
no matter how dauntlessly your empire sprawls,
how sharply your enemies have fallen,
no matter the temerity of your priests
or the ruthlessness of your corporate class,
nevertheless here he comes,
picking his way across the uneven sand,
over your ramparts of sand,
between your houses of sand,
to find your tiller-ear with his thumb and finger
and steer you into your own darkest cove.

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