

## The Lug Worm Diggers of Romney Marsh

By Joe Reynolds

The day starts as a silhouette,  
black against eastern red,  
between Dungeness' nuclear  
towers and the beach at Lydd,  
decorated with gumboot crushed  
crustacean skins and claws, bleached pink  
cracking razor shells.

Pulled, suck-stepping, sticking in galoshes  
through brine rippled sand, a shovelled figure  
bent over a bucket, cheating the wind,  
leaving no footwells in the shifting grains,  
the idling sea, the tide's remains.  
Temporary pyramids  
excreted obelisks,  
brief signs of territory,  
tell-tale burrow twists.  
The spade sliced shaft,  
the divot spit, the ugly black  
invertebrate  
slips, into the pail for tomorrows catch.

Back to shim shack shanties, the lean-to sheds  
pebbled gardens kept and hung with fishnet  
tapestries creaking on beachcombed driftwood  
pyres. Hand painted grainy white boards nailed to  
wind sculpted posts, weather crafted, coloured,  
sea-soaked, and sand blasted. Fresh bait for sale.