

A Beachcombers Journal.

When the winds that threw the waves, could shave, me closer than a barber,
When my footprints were more shallow, when the ocean had a gentler roar,
I picked treasures among the sharded glass, polished by abrasive sands,
And gnarled timber, from foreign trees, stripped white and naked of their bark.

I remember when salmon and eels braved estuary tides, to copulate and die,
when grass grew green from rain-soaked soil free of pesticides,
when trout were caught dancing the river flow, when mackerel shoals fought the tide,
and oystercatchers gorged on shellfish pecked from the breakwater piles.

But now, filtered through my arthritic fingers, wave-washed, the sand,
sticks, black with oil slicks and stains my palms,
and suffocates the sea-kelp, the lugworms, the barnacle
encrusted crabs and anemones waving, perhaps drowning, in low tide pools.

Listen, a guillemot, its feathers tarred and saturated, squalls,
its feet red webbed and snared by a cola-can ring-pull,
and that foam that once broke white, once crashed clean on this beach,
now festers on the foreshore, tinged umber with faeces.

So, from flotsam, from jetsam, from non-recyclable hydrocarbons,
from the leftovers, the litter, the disposables, the garbage.
from the pink bellied corpses of crustaceans that clutter
the shoreline, almost unnoticed the oceans, are a half degree warmer.

Joe Reynolds