

Meditation on an Empty Shore

By John V. Hicks

Creatures in rock pools
at mercy of sun and wind
wait for the tide's turning, captives
of the threatening hours, life and death
balanced at the cupped stone's rim.
To every desertion
a returning tide, a distant surf
massing and growing in the ear until
the storming legions come; keys
grating in opening locks,
the gates flung wide,
the rhythmic chant of voices
singing freedom songs, the imprisoned
caught up at last and carried
on the safe salt stream.
Even in this silence
knit by threads of bird-call,
the echo of water.