

VIRTUE AND PLEASURE

A guest in a little whitewashed room, its blind
stirred by gusts of flowery salted air,
there burst upon me an impossibly fair
and long pink beach at a dark path's sudden end.
In this blissful place of tidal land,
of causeways and cottages and fishing weirs,
the ways are marked "private," excluding its natural heirs:
now exiled in place, fossils of their kind.
I had my hosts' permission to walk in the woods,
but surely perfection is tarnished by ownership,
that manmade thing overspreading the neighborhood.
Those generations pursuing their livelihood
left beauty behind by chance, valuing kinship,
that which is good over that which feels good.