

Fall Weekend at Rehoboth Beach

Peter Richardson

Out along the shore the sky is wide.
Ducks fly, drafting like cyclists in Central Park
but unfettered, their path dictated only by season, instinct,
and windshifts. Below with me
sandpipers, like children, stand in groups, then motor around
on fast-twitch legs to peck for insects.

A one-legged sandpiper
keeps up with the others, hop-walking in his own way.

As a group, the small birds elevate off the ground, fly a length
fast and efficient, then land, stand, and walk.
Even the one-legger seems to prefer to walk.
I step on a clam shell, pick it up, and frisbee it into the surf.
I notice a dark shard of glass jutting toward me

and walk past on the smooth part of the sand,
slightly crusted from an earlier, higher tide.

Once I walked on Broadway like this, no shoes,
and Cather's Ivar came to mind:
We are to subdue our passions.
We have directives about our hands and heart, eyes and tongue,

but with our feet we feel the earth.

We step in shit or glass
and then wash, or scab over, and walk again.