It was never a very peaceful neighborhood, crows and gulls scrabbling for territory like the gangs on Wasson and Wall, gray hobos cast up on sidewalks like flotsam on the mudflats. Always soaked with that razor tang of garbage fire and low tide. It was home.

Shattered plates in the back yard. “We’ll leave them for the archaeologists,” Howard said. Plenty of middens still around here, Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw, broken shells and arrowheads. Some more recent: street of broken bottles, oil slick preserved in sediment. Our soft detritus.

That house is still there— the one with grass growing out the windows and an ever-growing menagerie of children’s shoes on the stoop. The yellow mansion is gone, though, finally caved into the bay, leaving behind the clustered remains of a chimney and a field of blackberries.

I’d stand here on top of the hill, gazing down and out, rusted trestle against bright water, North Spit fading into fog. Polyrhythmic rumble of waves and distant, crashing sawmill.

Who changed more, you or me?
Daina’s scattered off Cape Arago. Her little cottages filled with yoga bullshit and driftwood sculptures are sold off. Nich’s working nights at the Chevron on 101. Nando’s still driving his crushed car with his crushed body somewhere beneath the bay. Some of your dunes have been tamed into subdevelopments, shore pines like dragons exchanged for counterfeit palm. But then, I’ve lost some things, too. The boy who balanced on the heap of corrugated sheeting in the gap between the fence and the back of the shed, footsteps careful, so careful, finally learned how much harder he falls.