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Buried

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Buried

A man was walking along the beach
when something in the sand caught his eye
It was gold ---it caught the sunlight.

He was looking for earthworms
to catch fish with on the beach
when something in the sand caught his eye.
He dug it up to find it was a gold tooth.

He was intrigued, he dug it up
to find it was a gold tooth, to find
it was connected to a skull.

And parts of a human skeleton,
a hand tucked under the chin,
were connected to the skull.
He thought it looked very peaceful.

It looked like it had gone to sleep
like that: he thought it looked peaceful.
Then the children ran up to look.

The old people and locals
were not surprised; they told
the children who ran up to look
about Nineteen Forty-Two.

About the hundreds who knelt here,
blindfolded and bound, back in Nineteen

Forty-Two. Their backs to the shore.

For being Chinese or having the wrong
tattoos, they knelt facing the sea, their
backs to the shore and the firing squads.
Their bodies to the tide.

The *bojo kempei* then fed the
bodies to the tide, so they would
not have to worry about them.

Sixty years on, the beach has a bike path, a boardwalk
and a World War II plaque to remember the dead so we do
not have to worry about them. Until the next time
someone finds a tooth in the sand.

Stephanie Chan, 2009