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of cigarettes, saltwater and death. . .

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of cigarettes, saltwater, and death . . .

My hands are shaking so badly,
I can hardly light this cigarette.
It doesn't help any that the wind has picked up
So that my saltwatered hair
Has dried into a mass of seaweed . . .

I wanted to warn him,
To tell him to stay away from midnight waters.
But a drunk guy never listens to Reason's voice,
And a guy who's schizophrenic
Might have too many voices to listen to.

Maybe he had something to prove.
Maybe my altered ego's taunts drove him down
Into the depths of the Pacific . . .
All I know is that Life doesn't prepare us
To battle with Itself, and when our
Time comes, we always lose.

I think that's what scares me the most
As I sit here on the sand,
And think of the coral reef—
All those skeletons pressed into one mass.
I know his bones will join them
And I am afraid to look down . . .

— Tricia B. Swearingen '94