

Progress

The shabby, tufted eloquence
you hallowed from this rocky earth
is disappearing now,
its derelict beauty scraped
and bulldozed into money's artifice
hardly useful
for old men puttering in.

Down by the lobster pound
where fireweed once grew in abundance
and danced in the wind
the air is silent.
No frothy uplift of leaf and pod
to meet the sea-blown currents
that held balletic gulls aloft
over the ocean's skin.

What's left of Toot 'n Tommy's boatyard,
that old wreck and resurrection
of the lobstermen's trade
still stands at the bend,
shaking its grey, wood-shingled
workingman's fist

but the asphalt has now
reached past their yard,
a last boat propped for quaint effect
and Toot 'n Tommy, those wizened old men,
who seemed a fixture of the landscape
have gone to rest.

Only the unpaved section
that stretches round Doane's Point
and the old men down by the dock
who never tire of sunsets
or stories told over,
attest to when this fragile peninsula
held work and leisure

in organic embrace
that moved to the rhythms
of the seas' dark moods
and the earth's rough crust.

~Sheila Collins