

## IF ONLY

Their cottage sat on a grassy bluff  
weathered by salt spray, fogs, and rain  
blowing off dunes and bleached logpiles  
past tidal creeks seeping out to sea.

Cattails bobbed with red-wing blackbirds.  
Sparrows clamored through wild-rose thickets.  
Two dogs, spattered with sandy muck,  
snoozed on the sunny porch steps.

Dinner simmered on the stove.  
Pulling weeds in the garden, she smiled,  
hearing his tires pop gravel and clamshells  
at their rutted lane's long winding end.

The dogs leapt up, loped out to greet him.  
*This is how it should have been.*