

Along the Shores of Rockaway

Along the shores of Rockaway,
A child treads on the sand,
Chips of glass and plastic bottles crushed under her feet.

She clenches the pocket change of the ocean
In her two small fists:
Shattered remnants of a conch shell,
An aging strip of seaweed,
The abandoned armor of a mollusk.

Along the shores of Rockaway,
A child watches the browning waters heave a weary breath
To spew out the remains
Of laminated chemical,
And in her sand pails
She carries the ocean:
Bottle labels
Bottle caps
Bottled water,

Reminiscing over her grandmother's memories:
A mouthful of salty cerulean blue,
Pails of virgin sand,
As if they were her own.

Rockaway Beach is a landmark in cosmopolitan New York City. Though in the past few years community members and volunteers have been taking strides to removing discarded debris from the beach, beachgoers continue to nonchalantly discard plastic bags, bottles, and wrappers into the ocean, much to the detriment of the sea creatures abiding therein. It would be practically impossible for a single individual, even with the best of intentions, to restore such a large scope of territory. This makes it all the more imperative for us all to put at least a degree of effort into keeping our oceans and beaches clean, even if it means ensuring that we ourselves do not contribute to the problem.