

Ken Haas

Atlantic City, 1959

Sunburn and salt water taffy,
butterscotch fudge sliced thin and often,
young bodies coddled in mounds of sand.

A mustachioed sailor in lastex skivvies
boxing a kangaroo, the new Miss Amercia
waving by in a top-down Eldorado
as a waitress dives headlong on horseback
toward a pool at the end of the pier.

At dusk the wives are off to the club
in summer dresses to hear Frank and Sammy,
husbands flipping the last of a Chesterfield
over the rail, or beading up in booths
on late calls to lovers in Brooklyn,
when here and there the lines go down,
their coins and many more that night
hung in the dead machines.

Under the boardwalk my immigrant dad
is unplugging the phones.
We will be back near dawn, father below,
re-connecting the wires of holiday
to the sockets of the workaday world,
son above, silver nickels and dimes
rushing his pockets like sea foam.