

Mary Beth Hines

Nauset Light Beach, November 2001

That afternoon we walked
Two maybe three miles
Down the deserted beach.
Cold wind keeping us alert
To just-how-lucky we were.

Dark birds circled over the ocean.
The sky shifted and purpled
As we approached the dunes;
Were almost on top of them
when we saw the newly-planted flag –
A testament, surely, to someone loved.

East, a distant boat rocked
Black against whitecaps
And a slate gray sky.

West, the bruised sky melted
Into the grasping claws of winter trees
And a light flickered
In a window
In the solitary cottage
Across the marsh.

And Old Glory in the dunes
Bridging ocean to marsh,
Marsh to ocean,
Propelling us back toward the lighthouse,
Into the wind
Relentlessly down
The darkening shoreline.

A project manager by profession, **Mary Beth Hines** lives and writes in Massachusetts. She participates in several Boston-area writing workshops. An emerging poet, her work has recently been, or will soon be, published in the *Aurorean*, the *Blue Heron Review*, in the chapbook *On Farm Pond: Poetry & Prose*, and on MassPoetry's website and in their newsletter.