

## Joe Gouveia

### Where Home Is

*"A man may stand there and put all America behind him."*

--- Henry David Thoreau

This is where I lay me down to sleep,  
Not in the city nor its suburbs, but here,  
In the sands of a beachtown, where natural beauty  
Far exceeds fashion; where dirt roads,  
First formed by horse and buggy,  
Later used by Portuguese prohibition smugglers  
From Provincetown to hide "the goods,"  
Now lead to the sea, which answers all important questions.  
Here, we don't live by hype nor take  
Subways to work. On our horizon  
We see ships heading back to port,  
On their way home from their work,  
Fishing for Cod, Tuna, and a lifestyle  
Defining us and our towns, where we  
Await on rooftops, where the widow's walk  
Got its name, waiting for that signal,  
Telling whether a husband or loved one  
Made it back safely or died at sea.  
On this turf, Life is a beach, a zillion  
Grains of sand create our National Seashore,  
Where wildfires and logging destroyed  
This once beautiful, exotic forest,  
Now sand dunes where scrub pines spread,  
Hugging the earth, holding her to fight off erosion,  
The way Portuguese widows hug old wedding photos,  
Longing for their dead, what our kind call *Saudades*.  
In Springtime, controlled fires burn the shore,  
Cleanse our sorrows, sustaining Gaia's fuels,  
Restoring vegetative communities, while old  
Shipwreck masts wave to the firemen at low tide.  
These sands, serving as vacation fun for tourists,  
Life-and-death working conditions for local fishermen,  
Graveyards for whales and dolphins, where yogis stretch out  
And Buddhists meditate the rest of the Universe,  
Are our Life, our Home, that place where one  
Turns their back on the rest of the world  
And just rest, relax, bother to notice the world's vibrant colors-  
Make love amongst them, cast a rod, hope for a keeper, find peace.

**Joe Gouveia** is a poet and writer who lives on Cape Cod. He is Poetry Curator at the Cultural Center of Cape Cod; Poetry Columnist, *The Meter Man* and A&E journalist for the *Barnstable Patriot* newspaper in Hyannis and hosts the Poetry radio show, *The Poets Corner* out of WOMR-FM Provincetown. He has an MFA in Poetry from New England College.