

R. G. HAY

DISSOLUTE

Slopping round the edges of an agitated dish
the tide flows: swishing up the rim of ocean
basins, with its slow deliberate motion:
six hours or so to slop up, another six
falling back.

That's the rate life flows for old earth.
Men manage a headlong sixty or eighty
tides a minute — burn a brief candle.
The ocean has world enough and
time: lapping the land in a slow embrace
loving it to death at a lunar pace.

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DARWIN EXPLAINED THIS — I THINK.

I lived an Easter on Point Vernon once
in a house with some kind of crisis about
a cousin's impending nuptials, but no
neighbours: and I remember the relief of
space after four months crowding in a city:
I enjoyed the empty beach, the cliffs, even
the strange rocks with no shell-fish.

But when I went back I found Point
Vernon built over, impossible to get my
bearings from the bay alone after thirty
years. I drove round bewildered by
brick, fibro, and bitumen, then found
the cliffs yet sheer and solitary and
the rocks still lifeless: people breed
there better than gastropods, apparently.