

THE BEACH-COMBER'S KEY

By Alicia Adams

"The secret to seeing,"
The beachcomber said,
Setting out driftwood to dry,
"Is not to squint downward,
Hawk-eyed and keen,
Hunched and fixated on glimmers of green
Obscured amidst perforated lines
Of jetsam and sun-blackened weed -

"Treasures lie hidden in periphery,
The widening margins, the gold-lettered sea,
The calligraphic curls of birds
Rushing between rusted girders.
The rippling scan lines, the overexposed
The secrets that only the saltwater knows:
Myriad infinitesimal jewels
Catching the dying sun.

"For how could the eye thus attuned
To entirety's compassing sphere
Fail to alight in soft focus
On bottle-bright mermaid's tears?"