

She walked across the sand carrying a shoe in either hand, drawn forward as much by the great blue moon up ahead as by the sound of the breaking waves. The moon had a ring around it which promised or threatened something, she forgot what exactly.

The chill of the foam shocked her skin. She stood still and felt the delicious tug beneath her soles as the water sucked sand out from under them. The water was as cold as death.

*If I stood here long enough, she thought, just stood, the sea would draw out more and more sand from under me and bring more and more back in. Little by little I'd sink, ankles already, knees soon, then waist, then belly.*

She imagined standing up to her tingling breasts in sucking, salty sand. When the first, disarmingly little wave struck her in the face, would she panic? Would she, instead, laugh, as they said, *inappropriately*?

She dared herself not to move.

The moon was nearly full. She could see the headland on the far side of the estuary mouth and its stumpy, striped lighthouse. She could see the foam flung and drawn, flung and drawn about her. He was striding across the little beach behind her; she could tell without turning. Would his hands touch her first or would she merely feel the jacket he draped about her? Would he call out from yards away or