Casting Beads

David Konitzer*
"At the death of the changeling, the original Nicholas Lumb reappears in this world, in the West of Ireland, where he roams about composing hymns and psalms to a nameless female deity."

— Ted Hughes, *Gaudete*

You kick the clumps of dirt, the bits of sod — destroy the homes of ants and worms and things too small to see and — jumping from the dried-grass ledge onto the beach — you fail to recognize the woman on the rock within the sea. A chilly voice, a laughter's in the wind. The woman's foot is the center of all the world's oceans; small rings circle it, circle it, capture it. You look to where the sea becomes the sky — gulls silhouetted so black they look like crows. The sun is pushing the moon away and you keep your eye on the one black gull; the laughter rolls around you — rubs against you — the bird becomes a dot then goes away.