Necessary Light
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A man and a woman, not young,
are walking at tideline.
He wears a railroad cap pushed back,
his stomach presses against his jeans.
I can see the veins in her legs,
her blue blouse, the faded blossoms.

They walk as though it hurts a little to walk,
bent slightly forward,
an almost imperceptible limp.
Their hands are clasped, palms barely touching,
in the way of those who have held hands for years.
He stops to pick a seaweed-tangled rope
from the line of wrack,
pulls off bladder-wrack and kelp, rolls the rope
into a coil he will take home with him.
I envy them,
mooring-hitched to old love and the coastline.

The waves are pink combers
just touching the shore.
I've been sitting on a driftwood log
a long time, watching
one couple after another stroll down the beach
in this last grand light.

It seems to me they are an endless line in time,
moving forward toward me across the sand
toward the rocky point, then turning to walk back—
two by two.