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Alchemy

The young man on the beach
who has turned to gold—
he says he's getting red—
puts on a T-shirt,
grabs glinting keys,
hooks his shoes on fingers
and shakes the towel,
sending out a ghost of sand.
He had been scooping
spider-sized crab from apron surf,
letting them fall from his hands
like useless minerals.

We walk together,
away from the shore
into the sun
toward low-rise motels
along Gulf Boulevard.
The fine white sand
grunts with every step.
On our way, we pass squares—
perimetered by string
covered in mesh:
*"Sea-turtle eggs deposited here.
Do not disturb."*

Out of instinct,
we continue our route,
farther from tide lines than
the turtles had gone,
to a shelter where
neither sun nor anyone
will uncover us.