

Strewn

by [Barbara Crooker](#) in the [June 30, 2009](#) issue

It'd been a long winter, rags of snow hanging on; then, at the end of April, an icy nor'easter, powerful as a hurricane. But now I've landed on the coast of Maine, visiting a friend who lives two blocks from the ocean,
and I can't believe my luck, out this mild morning, race-walking along the strand.

Every dog within fifty miles is off-leash, running for the sheer dopey joy of it.

No one's in the water, but walkers and shellers leave their tracks on the hardpack.

The flat sand shines as if varnished in a painting. Underfoot, strewn, are broken

bits and pieces, deep indigo mussels, whorls of whelk, chips of purple and white wampum, hinges of quahog, fragments of flat gray sand dollars.

Nothing whole, everything broken, washed up here, stranded.

Light pours down, a rinse of lemon on a cold plate of oysters. All of us, broken, some way or other. All of us dazzling in the brilliant slanting light.