

utter relativity but bound by orders that are absolutes—the order not to refer to this, not to laugh at that, and in the presence of all uncertain things to stay silent. In all this we are losing our sense that some things really matter, and matter because they are *true* and

not just because some group of benighted people believe them, or some other group has decided to enforce them. If a university stands for anything, surely it stands for that idea of truth, as a guiding light in our darkness and the source of real knowledge. †

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## Seaward

Dana Gioia

Kneel on the stones,  
the sea commands.  
Then cup your hands  
in the shallow tide.  
Quench your thirst  
with stinging brine.  
No taste more bitter  
nor truer than mine.

Savor the blessings  
of my refusal.  
No argosy  
will satiate  
the hungers of  
your restlessness.  
No harbor house  
your homelessness.

The empty lighthouse  
flanks the sound,  
mute memorial  
to the drowned.  
Stand on the dock  
as the ocean swells.  
Death is what happens  
to somebody else.

*Dana Gioia is the author of five books of poetry, including 99 Poems: New and Selected (2016). He is the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.*