Tenderly, tenderly

We grew to know the good from the bad, the uninhibited from the shell-shocked. That summer the delay took root at last, as we ran, headlong, towards the sandbank. We stopped at noon. By then we were tired and careless. We began to contemplate our return, to go back to the shoreline we had only newly left. In that place only the smallest disturbances were noticed, the larger eccentricities passed by unremarked and slid, still hidden, beneath wet coverlets. Our bank was threatened, the day promised a quiet kind of uncertainty which would pass only with a particular reluctance and a particular effort, the kind we rarely spare. Still our placement faltered, our feet let us down, failed to keep us upright, betrayed the weakness of our grip. I bent low, my back a vessel, a carefully wrought craft. I could hold you long enough to take your weight on mine, double the body that my weak feet failed to shore up, recast your doubt as certainty and my own as a solid place to rest. That same construction, the same weak artifice, held for as long as we needed it to hold. And no longer. The end came at its appointed hour, heralding itself and none other.