What’s the Palm Tree For?

Chris Smith

I

It’s for that boulder of a sea turtle quietly making his way back—
Or So The Story Goes—

Further we walked along the shore past the dunes and palmettos
until the giant sea turtle blocked our path for the moon.

We all nodded gestures of forgiveness
and the rock made his way back to the ocean,
While the glittering tide billowed over our minds
    Crashing shallowly on our Leatherbacks.
“A night like this you’ll never remember until the day you die,”
echoed off the waves just before the ocean swallowed him in whole.
If I Died

II

That rock would swim back to that same beach
Forty-one years later, and lay my bones in the sand.
Thereupon I would hatch and make my own way
Into the insolid, find a pay phone, look you up, and ask—
“Remember the beetling dunes, the palmettos rustling
In the balmy breeze, our trip to the moon?”
“I thought you were dead my friend,” you’d say.

“No, I’m the Boulder. I found my way back to the ocean.”