

Tortoise Hunting

You don't catch tortoises with a fishing line.
Around nine in the evening you see them
drawing in their trawl-nets, making for shore,
then scissoring the sand in two
Like a train that lays down tracks as it goes,
they labour up the beach and dig a hole
a foot deep, or less, and leave their eggs.

Several men come and with a long board
flip the tortoise over on its shell,
and after cutting off the head
are surprised to learn that
the heart of the tortoise, in bodily stubbornness,
goes on beating long after.

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(Translated by Martin McKinsey)