

Joyce Sutphen

COMBING THE SHORE

It seems obvious what should happen here—
almost nothing, or rather nothing with
a difference, if that suits you. Poets

are people who *can* make something out of
nothing and still be perfectly useless.
When I was a child I must have prayed for

a job like this, something close to dusting
the star on a church in the harbor or
watching clouds float over the distant hills.

Now, even though I begin to see how
desperate our situation is, how
deep and cold the water, I find myself

looking for the smoothest of black pebbles
to skip along the bottom of the line.