

STANZAS BEFORE TIME

Quietly as if it could be
otherwise, the ocean turns
and slinks back into her panties.

Reefs must know something of this,
and all the incurious red fish
that float ditsily in schools,

wondering which school is best.
I'd take you for a drive
in my flivver, Miss Ocean, honest, if I could.

STANZAS BEFORE TIME from *Your Name Here* by John Ashbery. Copyright © 2000 by John Ashbery. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.