

# THE STARFISH THROWER



**There was a young man  
walking down a deserted beach  
just before dawn.  
In the distance he saw a frail old man.**

**As he approached the old man,  
he saw him picking up starfish from the beach.  
The young man watched the old man gently toss them  
back into the sea, one by one.**

**The young man gazed in wonder at this site until he finally  
asked the old man, "Why do you spend so much time and energy  
doing that? The waves will just wash them back up onto the beach again."**

**The old man explained that starfish will die  
if left on the sand in the morning sun.**

**"But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of starfish!"  
the young man exclaimed.  
"How can you make any difference this way?"**

**The old man looked at the tiny starfish in his hand  
and as he tossed it lovingly back**

**into the safety of the sea,  
he turned to the young man and said softly,  
"It made a difference to that one."**



Adapted from "The Star Thrower" (1978)  
by Loren C. Eiseley

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