



Meet Me at Dolle's

An Ode to the Salt Water Taffy Sign

I'll show you my favorite plank on the boardwalk.
Ordinary yellow pine, until you're standing there.
Until you're chewing a mint mellow taffy. The salt air
sliced thick, served with a side of vinegar.

The dune grasses sway, sand plovers shuffle,
we'll be at the center of everything
that fits inside a souvenir snow globe.

We'll hear the music in the grandstand, and the laughter
of the children as they exit the arcade, squinting their eyes
to take in the sun again, hoisting their prizes under their arms.

From here we'll observe generations of loved ones leaning against each other,
choosing this as their backdrop. The broad font, upright in the skyline, against
erosive rust licking its frame and long summers of beating sunlight.

Its welcoming shade reflects nothing but vibrancy. A friendly color you might finger paint,
or the first puzzle piece you pick from a box. You'll spot a twist of sweet orange
and vanilla custard—I promise we'll have that too.

After a slice of pizza, and before we browse about the bookstore. Passing
canvas tote bags in shop windows, hooded sweatshirts and towels,
telling us in large letters which beach town we're in.

As if we could forget. Having inhaled just one of these moments
is enough to exhale the memory again long after it's removed.
Reminiscing on Rehoboth Avenue, we'll savor where you stood.

*written by Courtney Ford,
winner of the Ode to the Dolle's Sign Poetry Contest, July 2026*