

POETRY CONTEST WINNER

Kateri Kosek

I'd hoped to finish this poem before it came true

Please do not ask me what I've lost.
Not today, the wind so warm I sit on the porch shedding clothes
then even consider a swim, but the water when I get there
is cold, as it should be in November.

Of course we're breaking
all the records again.

Don't trouble yourself.

The doomed little shoots the trees send out
don't know yet they've been fooled.

Let it be enough –
this warmth unbidden and unworked for,

enough that people drift by in rowboats fishing,
their voices lazy like summer,

that there are still new rooms to wake up in:
strange dogs barking, windows brightening
into unfamiliar pockets of sky,

the still-warm air sifting in at dawn and your shoulder
under my cheek.

For once, don't question, just take, because already the geese
have begun their restless shifting and already I
feel these things wanting to be lost, to lift off
and scatter, because November

is all about losing –
(the leaves of course)
the stunned little shoots that will finally
break their hearts on winter, the cattails I saw
go to pieces in a gust of warm wind

and the geese staging on the ponds
how those at the edges come and go, agitating
to leave, how at any moment they could take the whole flock
with them – the pond empty, quivering.