

Sarah Carey

Evidence

Her last night as a breathing
entity, my mother skirrs into sky
like a flock of seabirds startled from shellfish by dog

signs of distress, they said, but we weren't there
to testify, instead, imagine this:

A lift of wings, of wheeling gulls,
and there's that ship we read of in the poem,
leaving shore—a spread of white sails

shrinking into the blue pelagic
as another vision greets the vessel warmly

from the other side, beyond what anyone who waved goodbye
could see, or hear in the sea's sough
but when my feet find sand—sand soft enough

to sink in at high tide this bitter morning after
a record freeze, I level up, keep going, watch

my step, then spot a cloven hoof—no, four, no, eight, no—
even more upside-down hearts
tracking north, a running herd of deer

below a crescent moon or breaking dawn—
a sprint from a known preserve

to a protected park, we speculate,
across the towered condos, gated surfside
neighborhoods, past gutted dunes, depressed

amidst the human prints, dog paw
impressions—something urgent, something new

to follow, wait for. Believe.
Something wild.