

Blue

Once, you equaled my size,
two hundred pounds, incomplete
in your cows womb, swimming
to Magdalena Bay, Sea of Cortez,
where three tons sloshed into warm waters.

Linnaeus called you Balaenoptera,
the winged-whale. Your fin-wings,
like my hands, sans opposable thumb.
Your digits now numbering four,
tetradactyl to my pentadactyl.

You weighed two hundred tons.
One hundred long feet long,
displacing the weight of two
thousand men my size. You
lived a man's lifespan.

Salts called you sulphur-bottom
from diatoms coloring your skin,
like bullies calling you yellow-belly.

Your steam-like spout hailed whalers
to titanic tea parties where
they betrayed you, they betrayed you.

We killed blues once en masse.
We killed you the other day
when you surfaced to breathe
above the waves and a propeller
sliced your spine: twice sliced your spine.

We called you Blue, your dead
eyes mirrored my head size.
We interred your skeleton and
winged-fin hand in compost
to exhume for tourist views.

Dermestid beetles, one-millionth
your size, hone your bones.
Coliform bacteria, one-billionth
your size, digest flesh from
four-fingered, blue-boned fins.

For you, Blue, no more calves
weighing three tons, measuring
fin-to-fluke twenty-three feet.

Once, I equaled your size,
two thousand times my own,
the day I first held my son.