

Quicksilver

Katrina, 2005

The horizon has always silvered
in the distance if I stare too long,
a molten rope, liquid air
lifting like flies over roadkill.
It happens on car trips, on long walks,
even scanning the asphalt
in search of my runaway dog.
Once, I hypnotized myself
on a swing, tricked by a quicksilver wrinkle.
I dozed off and fell, and when
I opened my mouth to scream,
playground debris grated in my teeth.

When the edges of the world turn watery
they are supposed to disappear.
I submit. That truth has sunken in:
quicksilver visions wrinkle,
and then they vanish. But
this water is absolute. It remains,
though the hurricane is over.
I have studied from my exile
in this hotel room, witnessed
rooftop rescue, the folly
of mammoth sandbags. This water
is no silvered mirage. It clings like tar.
It swallows everything we are.

