

*Vilomah*

I enter this stanza bereft, a candle and rain gutter. I'm so small I could slip into a teaspoon, lie low and let the world steam. Is there a word in any language for a mother whose child has died? I ask Google. A Duke professor suggests Sanskrit, *Vilomah*: against a natural order. Last year, a French MP called for a portmanteau, a leather case of language opening into two equal parts — before: parents and angels—always after: *Parange*. The brass buckle clicks closed on a new now. How can grayscale water still shine? How can morning still marry sky? Are wings now witness, collarbones open over shadows of before? All of you open. All of you yes. All of you, my son. You are sea glass—blue, translucent and opaque, washed light. I close my eyes to hold you, now a constellation I call *Dolphin*, compass-drawn. Your starpoints dim and shimmer, fins whisper in calm water. Some mornings grief paints me gray blue, and I know there will be a day when seabirds stop singing, washed too warm, burned too bright. I have made a wing and a beak for their sorrow.