

Kink in the Polar Vortex: Letter to My Husband

If we were beaked creatures—lousey pigeons, perhaps
feathers swelling with air, inflating

with our fellow pigeons, shingled wing to wing on the lee
ridge of a beach-house roof, New Year's Day snowstorm—

or buffleheads, burrowed, oily feathers
converged with the pack, local black-backs driven
by freak cold into one viscous blot on the bay.

If we were beaked creatures we'd recognize
when the atmosphere's unstable. We'd have
known it was coming, as they did.

Yesterday, the bay emptied of birds.
Ducks peeled from water to shore, assembled
by stairs you & I use
to walk into the sea in summer.

Now, on the windward side of the New Year,
in the frigid, elliptical flow, the temperature rising

then dropping, you & I drop
into our own metabolic torpor.
We ride it out solo:

A woman looks up from her book, pulled
by the snow's diagonal spill across water.