

## 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.