

CRYSTAL KARLBERG

Whale Bone Landscape

Yellow flowers are supposed to make you feel good
so we hold them under our chins and accuse each other

of loving butter. In all our wall-eyed dreaming we never
imagined anything so fragile as this. Everyone knows

what it means to put stones in your pockets, but
laparoscopically speaking, it's been a good year. A few

small cuts are nothing when you consider hemorrhaging,
when you consider rupture. We trudge through

ghostly landscapes, our backpacks brimming
with a milky substance. The things I've seen washed up

on shore, you wouldn't believe, but never any teeth though
I was always looking. My parents are somewhere laughing.

How brilliant they thought I was, meaning, hard to look at
but easy enough to control. I'll prove it. *Anchor here*

for the night is what you said, but many years later
how will we remember it? Like survivors of a tornado.

You shaking the ash out of my hair. Remember the solemnity
of the funeral we held for the whale before the museum

swooped in to steal his bones for decoration? There was a real
connection there, and I'm not talking about something cosmic

or inherited. I'm saying galaxies are made of us. I'm saying
it's been a long walk and straight into the wind the whole way.