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Strandings

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Strandings

Abstract

a whale beached dies not from thirst, sunstroke or suffocation, but from crushed organs under its own prodigious weight.

Keywords

ocean, sea, whale, death

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May 11, 2012

Strandings

Andrew Payton

a whale beached dies not from thirst, sunstroke
or suffocation, but from crushed organs under its own
prodigious weight. for the whale, survival is a matter
of buoyancy. it can dive into the pressures of the seas,
summon its body to the skies, but must always return
to surface. its bowed back an island itinerant, irregular;
thick under skin, the memory of limbs, and land.

after the gulls and sun
pick it clean, fanged ribs barb the shore, pectorals
row the sand, and open jaws swallow breeze.

Andrew Payton is a Maryland native and MFA candidate in Creative Writing and Environment at Iowa State University. His poetry and prose is in forthcoming issues of *The Greensboro Review*, *Bayou*, *The Madison Review*, and *The Whitefish Review*. He is the Poetry Editor of *Flyway: Journal of Writing and Environment*.

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