

Glacier

It is everywhere. It is the water I am trying to teach my daughters to float in. It is the sky I tell them to keep their eyes on. It is the air I tell them to seal in their mouths should they slip underwater. I am a leaky boat, but I am trying to answer their questions. *As deep as thirty Christmas trees. As deep as twenty giraffes standing on each other's backs.* There hasn't been a sea here for seventy-five million years. I cannot explain that number. My daughters' ankles are sinking into the beryl water. No one can float forever. On the map, pushpins skewer patches of icy green like rare moths. I am trying to say it's too late without making them too sad. *It's like how you can't take the blue out of the white paint, like how you can't hear your name and not turn around.* The calving of glaciers is the loudest underwater sound on Earth. I dip my daughters' ears beneath the surface to let them listen. *It's like how you can't put a feather back on a bird, like how the bird won't fit back into its shell.* We step backward into the house. I wring the glacier out of their suits. I wring it out of their hair. I wipe it from their faces, but it is everywhere. It is the storm, it is the drowned harbor, it is the current, it is the bathwater that the baby slurps before we can stop her. The horizon rises. It rains. The glacier hammers the roof, the glacier soaks a corner of the bedroom ceiling, which greens with spores. On the map, the pushpins hover over green air, the green air is a spreading shroud. The storm surges ashore, mercurial and summer-smelling. We are not accustomed to the sea, so we describe it like a sky. The waves are tornado green and loud. In the water, the polar bears look like clouds.

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