

Thief

When I was seventeen,
I walked along Lake Michigan
and glimpsed a chain of people
dredging the water with their feet.

A man tripped over a boy
who lay beneath the waves.
He placed him on the sand.
Someone pumped his chest;

another blew into his lungs.
We circled him and prayed,
but he stayed gray like the lake
as it swallowed the sun.

When I was a young mother,
we walked Malibu's rock strewn
shoreline—a baby strapped to my chest
while my oldest son ran ahead.

Without warning, the ocean reared
and knocked my husband to his knees;
and then, I no longer saw my boy.
The baby bounced in his sling

as I sprinted and screamed
his brother's name. The waves grew
more enraged and pummeled the shore.
I rounded the bend. He was not there.

I looked up to see him standing
upon a bluff, beckoning
the ocean with his arms,
singing his names for the sea

into the wind.
He laughed *my blue,*
my deep, my magic,
mine, mine, mine.

When I was a harried mom
on a Saturday in June,
three sons were scattered
at parties and practices.

Only baby Simon was home
and I thought he was playing
inside, until my husband fished
him from the swimming pool.

My son was silent.
My son was blue.
My son was dead.
I grabbed my boy,

laid him down
and pumped his chest.
Each springy thrust begged
him to come back to me.

I kissed his mouth and filled
his lungs with my air.
I'd already reordered my life
when Simon opened his eyes.

It is said that a foolish
man builds his house
upon the sand;
I will build my house

on the highest mountain.
When I sleep with the windows
open at night,
I will hear only the wind

rustling the trees—
far enough away to ignore
the water's monstrous whisper—
mine mine mine.