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Ocean Beach at Twilight: 14

Dean Rader

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Ocean Beach at Twilight: 14

Dean Rader

Who's to say the stars understand
their heavy labor, or the moon its
grunt work across the hard curve of absence?
Who's to say the gulls taut on their tiny strings

believe the air? Everything seems surprised
by the fat slab of pink strung up against the blue:
the dogs dark in night's water, the fishermen
buoyed to the beach's pillar of stillness.

Even the teenage boy playing in the spoor
of foam and backflow pauses longer
than expected, his father's voice dissolved

in the din-drop of surf and sea hush. Night
is no curtain. When he stares out across
the wave of waves, who's to say he looks inward?