For the Attenuated

Praise, my dear one.
Let us disappear into praising.
Nothing belongs to us.
—Rilke, from "Elegy for Marina"

I seem attenuated, my friend the physicist
tells me. I think I know what he means. I am

stretched thin by grief, the taut wire of my life
grown weak. I wear it on my face, show it

in my crawl through the day, nights populated
with dreams of the missing. He says it

as though he fears me. But I am not a graven
image, a token of anguish to be looked on.

We are all living in extremis, attached, tensile,
to this wire. Swifts caught in the air above

the tipu trees, starlings wound around a belfry
as on a guide rope. We are all in thrall

to the earth—a line of seagulls, lit by the sunset,
forming a ladder to the sea. We are held

together by what has sliced us open. The tide
comes to shore and rushes back out to meet

itself. Here is your grief, on my face. My
gaping heart knowing yours.

Beverly Voigt

Beverly Voigt is a winner of the Friends of Acadia Poetry Prize and a Pushcart Prize nominee. Her chapbook "Woman of Salt" was published in 2018 by Seven Kitchens Press. A second chapbook, "Song of the Overcast," is forthcoming in early 2022 from Finishing Line Press. Her poems have also appeared in journals such as *Crab Creek Review, Northern Appalachia Review,* and *Sonora Review*. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, she currently lives in the South Bay area of Los Angeles and works as an editor and layout specialist.