

Kelly Jones

A Burning Ship Carrying Luxury Cars is Adrift in the Atlantic Ocean

Not knowing it was the week our dog would die we began the bathroom repair project we'd put off for months. We pulled out the broken sink, removed the toilet, and tore up tiles. Our dog laid in the hall and watched us rework this small slice of the world. While painting the ceiling and walls a mold-resistant sky blue I had déjà vu that someone had vanished and that I was heartbroken. I paused painting and glanced down at the shithole, thought about the ship full of flashy cars ablaze on the ocean and how underneath it all, so many things are just nasty. We want the diamonds despite the mines and we expect love without remorse. When the vet called to say terminal cancer, I hoped we'd have more time. Days later we said goodbye to the dog, returned to a quiet house with a still-torn-apart bathroom, threw some crap into bags and drove to the beach for the weekend. Each morning I woke before sunrise to take the dog out, but he wasn't there so I put instant coffee in a thermos instead and went down to walk along the shore alone. It was cold and beautiful and felt dreamlike. I love how when the sun rises it briefly looks like the horizon is on fire. I am home again now. I feel dreamlike. The bathroom is put back together. The flaming cargo ship has sunk, and thousands of sports cars now live at the bottom of the ocean. I can no longer smell our dog on the cuff of my jacket or the fabric of our couch, but sometimes I find my hand reaching down to pet the air where my mind thinks he should be.

"A Burning Ship Carrying Luxury Cars is Adrift in the Atlantic Ocean" was an honorable mention in the 2022 Patty Friedmann Writing Competition's poetry category.