

Off-Kilter

Sometimes I fear the sky won't hold the ocean
once we finally flip the world on its side. Like a bottle
of beer on the floor at a party. Knocked over when Brubeck's
"Take Five" plays and a couple jumps up, insisting

they can dance to it. Some music wasn't meant
to be danced to. Even so, we push back the chairs.
Clear a space on the floor and crowd together
against a wall. Choked so tight into one spot I worry

the floor will give. And there's only emptiness below
to catch us. Like a town folded back on itself to make way
for a highway. Or factory. Or pipeline. Everything
on our map shifted. Unbalanced. Like if everyone

in Brazil moved to Rhode Island. Steamer trunks filled with
so many languages. Or if all the elephants in Africa migrated
west. Just up and left the savannas. Settled in Kansas. Or South Dakota.
Either way, the earth, heavied, would tremble

enough to scare the loudest birds quiet. Enough to un-choir
the churches' rafters. Maybe when we do collapse,
this dry ground will be mother enough to catch us. And the wounded
sky healed just enough to hold our rising oceans.