

**The Swell**  
*In the aftermath of Helene*

We lap at dirty waters.  
They devoured the roads, the buildings.  
Roofs collapsed beneath people  
trying to breathe, chests constrained  
by the push of the flood—  
and I am thirteen again,  
the chlorinated press caressing  
my almost-adolescent body,  
chatter above distorted by amniotic  
sound-pressure waves. The loving ripple.  
I am lucky to be so loved.  
Fifteen years later, what of those  
unprotected by the thin membrane of a screen,  
who lose homes, loved ones, themselves?  
My aunt calls my cousin back and we can breathe.  
My mom admonishes me to reach out.  
I can only touch but so much,  
can only imagine as the fog settles above us  
after the boil advisory has been lifted.  
We speak low and gestate what we can.  
*I love you*, you say. Our fingers kiss our phones.