

## Beach Stones

Walking alone at Snee Oosh Beach  
forgetting the pattern of the stars you drew for me,  
how she said "I love you" in all the languages I used to know,  
relentless steps along rhythmic waves  
under a waning Gibbous moon

In town, at the butterfly garden on the hill,  
A man I didn't know looked me in the eye  
and called me brother,  
Brendan texted from New Orleans about Thomas Merton,  
Louisville, the Abbey of Gethsemani,  
and Catfish texted from Louisville  
about the derby, his racing form, his last long shot.

I remembered our house there,  
the porch and the cherry blossom tree in the yard.  
The woman across the street who ate hot dogs  
every night for dinner and loved my daughter.

Coming home, into the dark cottage in the woods,  
feeling weight in my cuffs as I switched on lights.  
I reach down and pull out beach stones,  
smoothed and shaped, from wave upon wave.  
I feel them, roll them in my palm, colored  
blue coral, pink salmon, and russet  
& set them aside, ready for return,  
next time, when I will throw them into the sea.