

Albacore

LaGuardia Airport around 2009, he checks
his bag, shows personal ID, takes his shoes off
and puts them back on, walks past the giant ads
for cancer donations and chain restaurants, past
the gift shops, the bookstores, the Burger King, everything
more-or-less dead at this hour. The custodian is humming
“Isn’t She Lovely” while sweeping trampled trail mix from
the moving walkway, endless metal steps dragging
jet-lagged bodies to connecting flights. He buys M&Ms
and Advil, finds his boarding gate, clears his throat,
floats to the airport’s only bar to gulp down the usual
misery, whatever turns the surface of his eyes
into glass and grease, warms his soft pink guts,
a fish left out in the sun. The fact is that every day,
after getting home from work at six, he fills his gills
in the garage before coming to dinner, chuckling
at his drowning wife while his sons tread water
in the dark spot on his forehead, untangle their hands
from the red of his eye. They say please and thank you,
eat from the reheated pot, ask to be excused.
Ten minutes before takeoff, stumbling
back to the gate, he trips and lands
face-first on the walkway, dead fish,
fresh mess, everyone turning away
while he flops.