

CHILD AGAIN

Floating in the pool,
eyes closed—
the smell of sunscreen
sparks memory.

The beach with cousins.
Coolers packed with ice,
stacked with fruit,
soda,
cold cuts.

The ocean:
magic beyond the eyes,
hugged tight
by the rounded coastline.

Burning feet on hot sand,
then back to cool water—
diving under waves
before they break.

We wander toward the pavilion,
eyeing ice cream
and skimpy suits.
The shaded boardwalk
cold on bare feet.
Sand clings between toes.
Hair wet,
I lie down to dry.

Eyes closed again.
Waves inhale and exhale—
like breath through the nose.

Everything,
everyone,
is here.
There's nothing
outside the beach.

Light cuts through my eyelids,
staining the dark
with red and yellow.

We'll eat pizza later,
after rinsing off the salt.
I told Uncle Gene
I could finish a whole pie.

Where was Eric that day?
Was he swimming
while I napped?

My mind drifts
back to the pool.
I can't stay long—
or I'll burn.

This concrete lagoon,
buildings and buildings,
a city of enclosed worlds.

What is time, anyway?
And where am I, exactly?