

February 7th, San Diego

by Mark Waldrop

When I step barefoot on sand you're here again
warm and soft and you let me sink in while
you hold me up and make my legs like running drunk in a dream;
away from all the nice things
everyone said about you.

And it seems like you're right here when I inhale
salty wet air like droplets on your neck.
I make your spot on the beach towel crumpled
in the middle — you've gone out to dip your feet in
or maybe just out of sight for a second behind me
quiet as rigor mortis looking for shells.

Instead of sandwiches I bring sushi rolls and red wine.
I have the tuna you always liked and I don't eat any of yours
except a bite so that you have something half gone
there on your plate. The rest of your rolls I throw with chopsticks
back in the ocean but some don't make it.

I have to save them from the sand. Most
of the wine I pour in after them right on the shore.
Then I look so closely you can see the water sucking
and gulping for yourself, spitting back and swallowing again
making pink cotton candy foam
until the whole ocean is drunk. The hollow
empty bottle makes a hollow empty bottle sound
when I drop it behind me.

