

winged words

In Wind

Now I am out of the wind
and I am sorry I never tried to sail.
Perhaps I would have drunk the ocean water
or eaten my own arm in the life raft.

Our kitchen is a calm place.
We sign the way we salt our food
in quick turns of reflex.

The cost of making this space,
little signs I have memorized,
how you blink your eyes when you are angry,
how you move your shoulders when you are sad.

You keep telling me how horrible
the wind still is out there
and instead of getting up to look
we make each other afraid.

I have sand in my mouth.

I have nightmares of the storm
being over
a long time ago

of search parties giving us up.

—Jane Kelleher

Father

The pink sink on its skinny chrome legs
still stands in the bathroom
like a shining flamingo.
Its memory is flying now
and I follow it
until I feel you
nudging me gently out of sleep
and so
I am home again
and a child once more
happy to follow you into the bathroom
and wash for school
to watch you transform this chore
into a fluttering of soft pink feathers.

Forgive me
for lying awake
waiting for the flamingo to fly away.

Standing over this white sink
wishing it were pink
I'm waiting
for someone to blow those feathers
back at me.

—Jane Kelleher

Jane Kelleher is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Iowa. Born in Worcester, Massachusetts, she became deaf at the age of four. She has deaf relatives. Despite her deafness, she attended public school with the aid of support services. In addition, her mother taught her extensively at home. This is her first appearance in Gallaudet Today.

Gallaudet Today, Summer 1983