

MIKE PUICAN

Spring Break

A woman tips over her shopping cart
of empty soda cans. A man in a blue gown
turns left down an alley, three steps
ahead of the hospital orderlies. A flight attendant
exits the cockpit and does the safety dance.
It's a slow dance. Now she's in the dark
and strapped in. She's glaring at us.

The sixteen-year-old next to me says
he'll never fly again. He orders another
Chardonnay, ice rattles in his plastic cup.
I imagine tampering with the smoke detector,
the intercom tells me to sit down.
"It took sixteen years to get here," he says.
"One has to be very lucky."

At the beach insurance men stare at the storm,
pissed off. Here comes the apocalypse—it's
backing up traffic. Spring is here
and everyone's hitting the brakes.
Raccoons chase each other across the road.
Rottweilers walk down the street singing
dog songs. They can't help themselves.
I step closer to women I shouldn't touch.
I'm lying on the ground, my back is getting wet.

Each of us lives with the decisions
made in our parents' basement
while they were on vacation. On the way
to the motel, inmates from the prison
wave to me from the back of their bus.
I pretend to be adjusting the radio: the fifteenth
caller wins a t-shirt; the DJ says we're sending out
microwave signals in eleven languages.

There are sea shells on top of mountains,
fish flapping in the weeds. Sixteen ants
pull a Cheese-It to their queen.
One is walking in the wrong direction.
We all have the same lucky number.