

JELLYFISH

Yesterday, reading finally by day what I'd long known by night, working Bruegel faces from the cratered stucco of the ceiling, pushing back the dreadful thing, the known and not known, yesterday I pressed my palm flat against your pixelated face and whispered, *gone*. Not Fallujah or Baghdad or Kentucky, this time, but really, *gone*. And I thought of your young wife, her grief, her small fists, that smart cap she brought from the Ukraine, so blue and rich against her smoky hair, and I thought of your fatherless child. You're a bedtime story now, old friend. A promise left unkept, a bordered box on a folded page. And I remembered snorkeling a blue cave off Maui, coaxing my new husband, so afraid of the invisible life that swarmed and snapped against our fresh skins. *Jellyfish*, the captain claimed, and at last my husband dropped my hand and slipped beneath the sparkling surface, already kicking away.

- Anna Scotti