Salt

I was driving east on route 6
along Cape Cod's inner elbow

towards the queerest outpost
on the New England shore

when I remembered you
sitting on the cold basement floor

the first night we kissed, both tipsy
on a jug of homemade cider

that I kept hidden in my closet
like our love so my mother wouldn't know.

That night, we were on the edge
of going off to college, spent

the swell of that summer watching
horror movies and opening

our clammy palms to a fortune teller.
Were you as scared as I was then

of what we were becoming?
I didn't have the words for what I was

back then, but if there is a word now
let it be *blossom*.

I cut my hair short the winter before,
the only way I knew

how to wave my flag to the world
what kind of man I was.

Driving between the colossal sand dunes
I think of my favorite Yeats poem —

how I loved the pilgrim soul in you,
how I wished to be the stars

over your head that you'd gaze upon

when you are old and gray.

When I picture you now
your eyes blink brightly

like the sky in Provincetown
on a clear June day.

You stand tall like a crisp pole bean
walking through your rows

of vegetables, tended with
the gentle touch

of your slender fingers. I hope
you love yourself, too,

like the salty sea breeze —
tenderly and always there.