

White Variations

I.

After days of waking and saying *there you are*,
today we rouse noiseless and cold—knowing.

You drag my suitcase through melting
sludge-filled roads bifurcating white powdered fields:

coating frozen cabbage rows and bent, brittle
rice stalks—languid green in the onslaught

of monochrome. The clear flakes turn dense
gathering force, coalescing

in the light, falling, thickening white
stinging my ears plum.

Today the snow falls on concrete and metallic
skin of cars—flakes

swallowed by larger flakes.
On the train I thaw, listening to

Rachael Yamagata's saddest songs sliding
down the smooth edges of white shell enamel.

II.

Your copy of *Two Years Before the Mast* is open.
Your pen parts the pages, pushing toward the book's spine.

Are you dreaming of close-reefed topsails,
shoals of sluggish whales and grampuses,

hidden by fog vapors, slowly rising to the surface?
Do you see our strength rising in us

as we float buoyant coated in warm salt water?
The first sunlight I've seen in eight days funnels

in from a corner of the sky and hovers on water.
A stinging white light like a gust of snow

or the white luster of a whale's belly.
Dream of us as these peculiar lazy creatures

of few words and deep long-drawn breaths,
resting side by side in parallel solitude.