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*The Goldfish*

He asked to be resurrected as a dolphin  
but dolphins were running low on earth  
so hours after his final breath shuttled out

from his lungs they wrapped his spirit up  
in orange scales instead and transported him  
to a pet store aquarium. It's comical

and it's not, considering the lesions  
that governed his flesh when he was human,  
the static of his wheezing, how his partner

held him long after he turned into a husk.  
Then the conversion to goldfish, not the sleek  
blue-gray body he always wanted,

one that would allow him to stitch—over  
and under and over—the ocean's sequin dress.  
Disappointed, but not unlucky

since a loveable boy carried that goldfish  
from the store in a clear baggie, knotted  
and bulged with water. Carried it home

where the tank waited, an emperor's pagoda  
like a wedding cake rising out of blue gravel.  
Thirty-six gallons of tranquility.

The dependable snowdrift of food.  
And no suffering—the world's shark,  
gouging anything that moves beyond the glass.