

Crossing · *Deborah Tall*

“Islands are great places,” he’d say,
“Till you want to get off.”
And he should know, driving
a wedge of a boat
in and out of that channel, decades.

But who knew better
than the horses
lowered into the hold
on a pulley strung from the mast,
the horses who always gave up
their thrashing when,
hooves finally lifted clear of the pier,
they swung full-bodied
in salt air, swallowing sure catastrophe.
They never walked the same on mainland.