

JANUARY GILL O'NEIL

The Year in Review

It was the year you displaced years of silence
the way the body displaces water in a pool
the way the bed remains sullen from your depression.

It was the year the neighbors behind us bought a hot tub
splashing their happiness in our faces. I watched
from the bathroom window hoping they would boil.

It was the year I knew we would never be that family.
No one would ever been envious of us, never say,
look at that family. See the happiness on their faces.

No. It was the year the word “maybe” pivoted
like a turnstile in the middle of our fights
refusing all requests for wisdom or clarity,

the year you decided staying was more of a risk
than leaving. The year you had no fight left in you.
What a soul crushing year it was. It was

the sink or swim year. The year I learned everything
alive in the world survives by adapting,
the year you displaced us as freely as water.