

Teakay Tinkham

The Boat in My Backyard

My husband moors his boat in my backyard.
He sails into the sunset every night
with neither charts nor compass, just some hard
liquor and his smokes, Marlboro lights.

I join him on his journey one night this week.
I climb aboard, kick back and share his smokes.
He cracks open a bottle. If we speak,
it's nothing serious — same lies, same jokes

we always tell. Tonight, we're sailing down
to Ocracoke, where he'll restock his booze.
I'll grab fresh grouper steaks somewhere in town.
He'll grill them on the boat while I choose

and navigate our final port of call.
We haven't laughed together since last time
we took this boat to sea — before his fall
from grace, fall from the wagon, fall to crime.

He hurls his empty bottle overboard.
It smashes against the back of my garage.
He glares at me. Before I can say a word,
his ankle bracelet buzzes for a charge.

It's two o'clock when I take down his sails
and wade through waves of grass up to my hips.
He watches me while leaning on the rails.
He raises a fresh bottle to his lips.

