JENNIFER GROTZ

Go Along

—return to Cassis

That far-off glittering that leaps right off the sea
and into the sky is the gulls, at dusk, fishing.
And that happy excess of landing back
in another language is the temporary doubling
of the world that has two words for everything,

starting with the gulls, *les goélands*,
it sounds like *go along*, which they do, just above
the smeary waves, the sea a kind of frosting
spreading itself flatter and flatter. Yes:
something about how flat it is, and blue,
except when it's gray and like a liquid steel,

the sea makes me want to go along,
the lapping waves calm the mind though
the sea is the quintessence of violence and force
just distantly removed. Sometimes the waves
look like sharks, sometimes they look like
swords or spears or men on horseback
or soldiers in a cacophony of war,
which make the *goélands* conjure white
handkerchiefs madly waving surrender,

how the sea teases out these meditations,
illusions, though other times it returns
each thing to what it was, the unorganized
slosh or slap against the pier, the unsynchronized
cries of the gulls, the day's overwhelming
sense of loneliness, which I can only
register not do anything about—

and the blue of it is endless
so I'll love it endlessly,
it is a treasure hoard of sardines
gleaming like coins beneath the surface,
goélands above, and I stare until I almost become one,
I imagine the wind's invisible muscles whip beneath
my belly, the air's damp ripples of velvet
as I go along, as I walk with arms in one language,
in another stretch wings wide.

Poet and translator **Jennifer Grotz** is the author of *Window Left Open* (2016), *The Needle* (2011), and *Cusp* (2003). The recipient of a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award, Grotz has also received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. She teaches at the University of Rochester and is director of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conferences.

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