

KIM GOLDBERG

Tidal Pull

I always know when you are returning
 because I start dreaming
 of the estuary ... at work, in
 long meetings all the chairs dissolve
 into muck-stuck logs, slick
 shadows, raw reek of lost bodies caught
 on high ground, lying twisted
 in creamy shells, smelling of life
 and death at the same time, soft tideline tonguing
 moist membranes, stroking silken
 beds of kelp ... helpless
 against undulating fluids, salty, oozing,
 penetrating every
 pore, encrusting tufty mounds
 of glaswort ... and the whispers, oh
 the never-ending whispers of
 papery grasses, faster, rattling, shattering, scream
 of gull overhead, spent shotgun
 cartridges sinking
 in brine ...

time stands still, lies
 flat, splayed,
 dampness dangling like corpse
 legs, slime mats glisten in
 dimming light, blueblack water shape-
 shifts, trades places with
 raven's back, intergrades openly ... endlessly ... blameless