Kristin Berkey-Abbott earned a PhD in English from the University of South Carolina. She has taught at many colleges and is the Director of Education at the Hollywood (Florida) campus of City College. She has published 3 chapbooks: *Whistling Past the Graveyard* from Pudding House Publications, *I Stand Here Shredding Documents*, and *Life in the Holocene Extinction*, both published by Finishing Line Press.
GRATITUDE JOURNAL

She has released the obsessive
record-keeping of her youth:
the journals, the exercise logs,
every grade she ever earned,
a neat catalogue of a life, papers filed
in folders across multiple cabinets.

In the morning, she no longer chronicles
her dreams. Instead, she fills
the feeders and listens to each chirp.
She measures the mornings in metaphor,
but she writes nothing down.
Instead of identifying every feeling,
she notes the new arrivals to the yard,
each creature and every preference.

In the afternoon, she pots the plants
that will attract the birds and the butterflies.
Once she would have recorded
every step of the process, every choice
linked with its outcomes. Now she delights
in blooms and blossoms, knowing that the next
year can take care of itself.

As the light drains from the day,
she listens to the sound
of rain on the roof. She notes
the different tonal qualities as rain runs
through the gutters and drips
into the parched earth.
She lets the rain soothe
her into sleep, no need to write
down her various gratitudes.
WHEN I RUN AWAY TO THEOLOGY SCHOOL

When I run away to theology school,
I shall think no more of mortgages and insurance rates.
Sea level rise will recede to the backwaters
of my consciousness. I will eat
whatever is served to me, and I will fall
asleep at a regular hour.

When I run away to theology school,
I will turn off the news. I will submerge
myself in books from an earlier age.
I will abandon the controversies
of our current time to lose myself
in arcane arguments of past heresies.

When I run away to theology school,
I will pray more regularly. I will spend
more time in the chapel. I will write liturgies
and construct worship spaces to match.

When I run away to theology school,
I will finally structure my life in a way
that makes sense. I will strip
my life to its barest essentials.
All will be revealed
when I run away to theology school.