DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

Yesterday Japan turned radio-active,
reviving our interest in iodine.
In spontaneous soup kitchens, ladles churn
for hours, the hot broth a placebo chaste-
ned by the chill of early March.

Malfunctioning, we crave sugar, crave salt, even with the house blown down and treasured manuscripts deep under water, flapping like manta rays.

With an inflamed palate, intelligible speech is impossible. Whatever is most profane becomes commonplace. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that food taken orally is useless.
INSOMNIA, PART III

There exists little clearance
between my brow
and a tropical depression.

It surprises me how furiously
the inner harbor roils,
the lighthouse lightless,
darkly designed to hamper
my sojourn from an upstairs
bedroom to a laundry

where nothing dries.
I shove a cellar door open
into an oceanic night, my feet

as good as liquid. The world
inflates beyond statutes—
unbuffered wind, tree limbs

like parcels arriving unbidden.
My eagerness and autonomy
are forces reckoned with.

I falter on the cellar steps
of a dwelling as dismal
as a humid night

while pellets of rain plummet
into the harbor beyond any critique
haphazardly devised in the palisades
above my eyes. A dire need for rest
   impels me to reclaim a wet cat
   shivering on the slumping porch.

What relief remains
   resembles a capsule of chalk
   or granite, a recommended dose

for adult use. In this context only,
   my weight seems important.
   I swallow the manufactured

stone meant to redress
   the doldrums or typhoon.
   I feel, I feel, and then

do not. At last, turmoil
   removes its fabric from my skin
   and sends me naked off to bed