

Weightless

On the last stop of our last day of vacation,
we check our final box: Poipu Beach,

where, waist-deep in the South Pacific,
ankles neoprened, we kneel, we fin.

Mask clips secured, we swim,
but not too far from shore, freedive

but not too deep—after all, despite
the guard stationed to reel us in, to watch for rips,

tourist flyers all remind us safety lies
in our own hands, which open, fingers-wide,

for paddling. Yet, in this quest for the rarest
tropical fish, iridescence overload,

call me reckless; I kick
with abandon, and as usual, when we share water

bodies, lead. But every sometime-snorkeler knows
heaven's entrance is no snap. Ask Poseidon:

between flippers not made for sand,
waves breaking, body blows when you stand

to steady, and rental gear, always falling apart—
you may not believe you'll ever float

with ease, but if you'll follow me farther
past the tromolo, I'll show you

how I breathe, let go of all we grasp
and question, make my way

from warm predictability, to cooler currents,
down-gazing at the radiant reef.

Sarah Carey