Sea Church

By Aimee Nezhukumatathil

Give me a church
made entirely of salt.
Let the walls hiss
and smoke when
I return to shore.

I ask for the grace
of a new freckle
on my cheek, the lift
of blue and my mother’s
soapy skin to greet me.

Hide me in a room
with no windows.
Never let me see
the dolphins leaping
into commas

for this water-prayer
rising like a host
of sky lanterns into
the inky evening.
Let them hang

in the sky until
they vanish at the edge
of the constellations —
the heroes and animals
too busy and bright to notice.

Source: Poetry (July 2017)