



**THE
ADA
CAMBRIDGE
POETRY
PRIZE
2023**

FIRST PRIZE

COASTAL COLLAPSE *by* ROSS GILLET

I'd never noticed the loose stillness
of the dunes how they barely hold together
the moon determined to hold steady

as it sails straight for a headland of cloud
already rearranging itself into islands
and the sea trying to keep the beach perfect

all this with your absence hauling at me
from the uncharted other side of our world
like my own personal moon doing its best

to drag everything away forever
you always said I never understood the gravity
of the situation what situation I always asked

well now I get it I can feel the beach
hanging on to our favourite bit of coastline
and the tide is out I think the ocean

is sneaking away to be by your side
it will take the dunes with it as a reminder of home
and here I am with maybe a few rocks

>

and the bay a valley I can walk through
knowing the sea bed is a safe place
no storms because the sky has followed you

you have more sky than you need now
I hope you're making the most of those blue distances
remember we walked this mile of shoreline

we could see the curve of the world from here
but now the horizon is at a loose end
the sea has vanished the sky will never come back