

MARTHA SILANO

I have to deepen my know

ledge because it's shallow like a tarn
in late August, because I don't

have a grasp on the rate of melting,
on the sponge-like Greenland firn

which had been keeping the oceans
from rising. My trifling know ledge,

unexcavated, undredged, forbidding me
from having down pat the warming

of oceans, the movement north
of commas and pikas, little egrets,

the strengthening of tropical storms
with names like Matthew and Gaston.

My ledge, lacking gravitas, brims
with gaseous laughter, with buoyant

conclusion and calamity. I will find me
a walk-behind trencher, a skid-steel loader,

and I will dig this sad excuse for a reef
into a mantle. With my significant foxhole,

I will gorge and moat, trough and dig
till I've hit bedrock, will make this ledge

of mine a mountain—more sloped, more shored,
more earthworked; I will scoop and scrape

till I surface the contents of the whale
that washed up on a Spanish coast,

fifty-nine plastic items in its gut—two flower pots,
spray canister, thirty-seven pounds of trash bags.

With this trailing pipe, I track the moth,
the mole-like Pyrenean desman elevating

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eight inches an hour. With my modish know
ledge, I will no longer possum but posit

not a wall but a walrus's need for ice—
its floating preschool, its staging ground

for lunch. On my berm they'll glide
and glissade, congregate, give birth.