



Ron Paul Salutsky

Alligator Point

I could be a walrus, a watercress, a piercing
blue noise at the end of language, a sense of loss
in the way the beach clouds never quite clear
on a late December day.

You lie in your underwear
here on the Redneck Riviera,
assuming you couldn't keep a bikini handy
at my house, and now we must decide,

are the local oysters safe to eat,
and do we dare take the road home
through the Apalachicola Forest
where we're sure to see wild turkeys

and whatever else has been hit
there surrounded by turkey
vultures. There is no *here* in the wild,
only unsure footing, only grace

in the way limbs are fallen,
when we arrive, not falling,
above us. Above us only sky
laced with light and winter leaves,

and now we must decide, are we lost,
did we miss a forestry service sign
behind a tupelo branch brought low
by the weight of its own flowering,

let go a leaf whose inward spiral
describes an emptiness it seems
to surround, hemmed in by ground
and sky, caught in a wheel of air.