

Donika Kelly

Dear—

I call every seaside Atlantis,
every deep interior a future coast.

Question: How do we process being
overcome when we know the water

is rising, rising because the sea ice is melting,
melting because the dumb animal we are

shortens everything we touch into brief
and useful pieces? Question: Is it too soon

to call our marriage Atlantis, soon overcome,
soon underwater, a city where we lived

for a while in love, now uninhabitable—
now inhabited by whatever the sea

brings to it: the kelp forest stretching
toward the sun, the young anemone,

small fish and large, making use
of what we no longer need? Question:

How do you drown a city? Throw
into the ocean every suffocation:

the folded clothes, the lemon tree,
a wife stricken with loneliness, anything

that will sink as a stone. The water
rises, brushes our ankles, the patella and hip.

Dear one, again, is it too soon to call?
I cannot swim and I will not drown.