

**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.