

*Megaptera Novaeangliae*  
Allana Stuart

Humpback  
slumped back  
in the sand,  
when we got here you still  
held the shape of a whale  
washed belly up  
on the beach.

Now your ridged skin splits  
until you  
seep back into the sea,  
your long bones  
exposed to the air  
twist and turn  
as if seeking the sun.

But your carcass forms a cavern,  
shelters the sandpipers  
picking maggots  
from your flesh,  
tiny beaks dipping  
in and out of  
the putrid pool you've become.

In winter I'm sure  
the eagles will arrive  
to tear up what's left of you  
with talons sharp like knives.

By then I'll be long gone  
but still haunted by  
your scent  
even with an ocean  
between us.