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## Measuring the Distance

Athena Kildegaard

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# Measuring the Distance

ATHENA KILDEGAARD

It's possible to measure the distance  
between us. That is to say, in miles  
or kilometers, or hours driving  
non-stop with the window down  
so you don't fall asleep. And it's agreeable  
to say This moon that will be full  
tomorrow waxes in the sky  
where you are looking. How pleasant, too,  
to think that the monarch flying by  
could have landed on your violets.  
Its trip south connects us, like the moon,  
like the long stretches of highway  
across the desert. But the fact is  
the distance is as intangible as  
an astronomer's remarking that the light  
you see has been coming toward you  
for centuries though its source is long gone.  
The logic of it defies the heart's knowing.  
But you know, don't you? how unsatisfying  
this all is, like balancing a checkbook  
or scrubbing the stovetop, an exercise  
in futility. The distance can't be measured.  
Because I'm here and you're there.