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Two Poems

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Two Poems by Mary O'Donoghue

Thanksgiving in Florida

The giant roadside orange
might be full of children
packed vesicle-tight together
cheek to small fat cheek.

At a bar reclaimed from the water
a dead ringer for Oliver Reed
blears his details, wipes them clear:
His girlfriend.
Is coming.
From Gatwick.

We skim over swamp in a boat
made of tin. Routed birds scarper,
filling the air with a blitz of black paper.
We chunter close to alligators
who test-click their teeth
like just-fitted dentures,
and eyeball the day
like it's bothering them.

We visit the place where you
were the neighbourhood rascal,
shrugging off the door locks
of your mother's great terror,
running down the way down,
galloping right the way down,
stopping short at the drop
to the Indian River.

Manatee

The manatee I never get to see.
Instead you tell its strange
cobble-shop shape to me:

big as a cow in the brackish water
thick-skinned and finned like a seal
with the nose of a golden retriever.

And I can see it, maybe like Dürer
drew his rhinoceros from hearsay,
riveted together those bits of rumour.

Your manatee, so pug-lovely,
and it just never knew
what it wanted to be.