

## Midnight

For Tony, we'll say  
For Tony

Corals are resilient I've been told  
and so are we - we've survived worse. Just ask  
your elders they'll lift their shirts, show you  
bunker scars, typhoon tent towns, atomic nightmares  
of lost irradiated islands. So this  
is just another incoming tide to shore up against

Hence seawalls  
Hence foreign aid  
hence consultants, terms of references,  
a framework for asking each other: Which island  
will we move to? Which island will be hit first?  
Which island is worth salvaging?

The wreck - a slow moving accident, the Ultimate  
Disaster. Atollic oblivion.  
As if we haven't experienced this before  
As if we haven't been told that evacuation  
is safer.  
*You'll come home*  
*Some day*

2030, 2040, long term versus short term  
we debate this around the table  
We do the work, submit reports  
but we are short on time. Before  
the clock strikes midnight,  
before the pumpkin rots  
before our glass island shatters

are we so easily broken?

Maybe we need flags  
to tell us how afraid we should be  
We have flags for covid threat levels:  
yellow for safe, yellow for prepare, yellow for  
complacency, yellow worth celebrating. Covid free.

The US is celebrating, part of it  
anyway, they are dancing in the street and  
kissing babies because celebrations are worthy  
because the US will be back in the Paris treaty  
because it feels like multiple breaths taken at once,  
like bubbles bursting through reefs

We reassemble ourselves  
We gather the calcium carbonate to grow  
our coral skeletons into sunlight

Look -  
up ahead -  
a lush marine garden awaits

For Tony, we'll say  
For Tony