A Final Dream of Longing

VIEVEE FRANCIS

I am the defining round

Circumnavigate a near perfect circle with a fingertip –
teeth don’t bear careful enough
witness, so don’t use them –

In brief ecstasy I call on the Lord
with a thousand words for please

Calls slice the air –
a flock of cranes driven down by hunger

My back holds its awkward position
    and I am flying –

that seminal proof of Saints.
About the author

Vievee Francis is the author of four books of poetry: The Shared World (Northwestern University Press, 2023); Forest Primeval (TriQuarterly Books, 2015), winner of the 2017 Kingsley Tufts Award and the Hurston Wright Legacy Award; Horse in the Dark (Northwestern University Press, 2012), winner of the Cave Canem Northwestern University Press Poetry Prize; and Blue-Tail Fly (Wayne State University Press, 2006). Her work has appeared in numerous journals, textbooks, and anthologies including Poetry, Harvard Review, Yale Review, Best American Poetry, spin.com, and Angles of Ascent: A Norton Anthology of Contemporary African American Poetry. She is also the recipient of a 2024 Guggenheim Fellowship and a 2021 Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry. She is a Professor of English and Creative Writing at Dartmouth College.