

Bia, or Force

after Stephen de Staebler's "Winged Woman Walking"

Tissue paper pulp:
birch bark tears on the horizon:

the before a storm pane shock:
like a strap crack
across the shoulders of the sky:

I've opened September windows:

I don't want the shapeless
October mud:
the wet sidewalks slick as longing:

I don't want to hear the green
crunch like drying bay leaves.

With only one wing
molted to stone and steel
it's impossible to elevate
above them:

acceleration: mass.

A maple top crow:
loud as the black heel scruff
of its wing snap:
doesn't stop its barking insult:

*Your stump: it yells:
is merely fumbling.*

When the causeway flooded over
I dreamed of fish on the asphalt
flop gasping:

when the sky churned
and my feathers loosened:
at first I thought: *sloughing:*
the season shift cold:

when a hawk deadweight tumbled
like a beanbag to the olive grove:

when a retriever brush bound
to carry it back but couldn't find it:

the way my feathers faded:
watered down strawberry soda:
then iodine: then umber:

I didn't think:
oracle: omen: soothsayer:

when the atrophied stub
of the first snapped off
I decided to pick it up
to mourn
not to leave it to ants
and small animals.

But when the next one
already worm worn falls away
the decay like an eyespot
quilled stripped fritillaries:

when the shrivel:
when the lice:
when the calamus turns
motor oil and clay:

when I leave it in a shallows of weeds.

I now know what he meant
as we strapped him down:

pins granite set:
bands ankle tightened:

and all I thought:

*clamp: slack:
winter-beaten:
immortality:*

but didn't say a word:

but I now know what he meant:
when we bore into the stone:

craggy: cleft:

when he smiled at me
like smuggled fire
and said: *Vestigial*.

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