This is for the birds

after Hannah Claus’s “Birds” (2012), a mobile inspired by that moment in the Haudenosaunee creation myth when waterfowl rise up to catch Sky Woman, break her fall, and ease her to the back of turtle

my mother falling through
the blue of Attic Angel’s dining room
concerned birds trying to catch her
failing, hovering
earth an industrial-grade green
carpet, pink-rosed, crumbed
her cry, bird-song caught
in the throat, soundless, nameless

This is for the birds
sewing thread she saved and strung
on just-budded dogwood
nests woven with jet-black
scarlet, sky-blue, maroon
her fall unbroken, the birds
reforming their cloud of memory
residents rising from their wheelchairs
to catch her, falling

This is for the birds
one small finch hanging from
a tangle of color from the high branch
she is told to not move, she is told
breathe into the pain
siren weaving its way toward
nurse’s soft coo into her broken
cold stretcher, narcotic haze, bird-sips, bird-baths, rehab

This is for the birds
their sweep into another
world of falling women
their flicker of blue, white
merging with clouds, sky
their diligent swoops and uplifts
their trembling vigilance
what my mother said to the aide
she worries she has offended
This is for the birds
he is tall, Japanese, advises her to be
one of the salt-colored birds
catching falling women on her wings
floating them down, a soft
landing, clouds shimmering
as if held by threads
shadows on the wall spelling
her lost memories, her new name