

Here are some of the submissions from our seventh Invite to Write inspired by
the following work:



straight and true
blue, my rock.

i'm seeing
its arc, that of all
things, and the space
of its into, the hue
of an ageless sky.

in some hands
material takes heart,
rounded and profound—
who knows the color
of those nails?
the residual between,
the animal blood and
gifted dirt.

chalk of feathers
caught in our throats
lets give this cough
a name, a bird,
and catch its sides
into a stone.

- Tassos Bareiss

AVICENNA AND THE VISIONARY RECITAL

Of the thousand thousand birds who took to flight,
thirty survived, to reach the gates of heaven.

Those survivors, torn, half-dead, their wings racked,
were turned away. Avicenna saw them.

He heard them whisper, falling among each other,
“How could we think that He would welcome us?
Only the helpless surge of love brought us this far,
and love is a selfish joy. We are worthless.”

Avicenna cried out, seeking the Perfect Nature.

The strength of his longing made his Angel nod,
and he was allowed to understand his vision.

The slope of the mountain carried him to God.

Centuries later, caught in the same condition,
bewildered as thirty birds, broken in wing and bone,
and stranded on inclinations, I cry “Avicenna!
I am my final abstraction. Help me home!”

- Robin van Loben Sels

Ancient Messenger

Who but the smallest
can fly through
the terrible winds
that choke off flight?

Who but the smallest
dares to find a way
past the desert
and the thorns,
the towers of mind
so fixed in their labyrinths?

It has always been so:
the task of one, lone bird
who finds land,
who brings peace.

- Judith Capurso

The Bird

A wingless bird in solo flight,
Sleekly glides through time and space.
Ascending gently, scaling heights
And looking back, its tail a second face.

Janus-like, it sees what was and what will be,
Beginnings and ends, beyond our bounded sight,
A bird's-eye view of eternity,
Whose elusive thresholds stay in mystery.

Above its bronzed belly, a primordial sea appears,
Like evolution's womb, bearing past and future life.
A fish, a frog, a human embryo in utero.
Frog's legs reach into the dark, primeval ooze below.

From dark sea bottom to liquid light above,
Proliferating life forms, stages, levels.
The Bird bears the biological memory
That all of life carries within itself.

Sculpted, multi-colored, and mottled beauty.
Wood or rock, stone age or bronze?
Transitional god born of a transitional age,
Emissary of all that we have forgotten,
Harbinger of all we are yet to know.

-Henry Friedman

The Perfect Geometry of Instinct: On an ancient anonymous carving of a bird

for Gisela

1

This time of year after their final gabble
about direction and the weather ahead
they rise in the perfect geometry of instinct
spiralling steadily over the lake
high beyond the trees toward the clouds
and the travail of their travels

the lake surface quietens again
after the massive upsurge of turbulent wings
the woods now empty of the last calls

2

Then I did not understand how you could refuse
the mysteries of that necessary flight
becoming an earth-bound sojourner instead

the next few days and your anxious waddle
revealed the splintered wing bones
what was I to understand from your brokenness?

that there is no easy passage
between the earth and sky
perhaps some ancient theory
about the transmigration of souls
or something about the interconnectedness
of all things and the truth of Indra's net

3

Later with you healed and squatting on the veranda table
the artist in me strove with a whittling knife and a modest sense
of colour to make you jubilant through the psyche's handiwork
in your beady-eyed presence my hands wrought you

in flight so you might begin that longer journey through time
to arrive safe and whole one day beside another lake

4

I will be there waiting for you

- Tony Ulyatt

Fly Fly Fly

Destination known and unknown

You continue to fly

They tried to shoot you down

Could not bring you to the ground

Fly fly fly

You caught the bench marks

to pause, breathe, laugh and cry

Fly fly fly

As you universally try

Fly fly fly

Bringinning inner peace for kings and queens and, I

Fly fly fly

As you land in our psyche

Again and again

As you fly by

- Lera Welch