

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