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How She Got Her Real Name

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How She Got Her Real Name

A woman too old for jury duty
Waits outside the courtroom
For her sister. She throws
Her handkerchief down the stairwell,
Watching the initial A swirl like one arm
Shooting off a child's star—a stamp
For the first tree
Drawn well. The branches are firm
And will hold the overgrown raven
With its beak layed over with a garter snake.
The bird is wearing a plug hat
Like her father's on an evening out.
Her mother is pinned to a clothesline
Inside her wedding gown. In the sky
Between sheet lightning,
Is a bible, a gavel, her father,
The judge, naming her—Avis,
Daughter of the blackbird of Newmarket.