

# The Oval

---

Volume 7  
Issue 2 *Staff Issue*

Article 42

---

2014

## South

Grace Yon

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/oval>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

---

### Recommended Citation

Yon, Grace (2014) "South," *The Oval*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 2 , Article 42.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/oval/vol7/iss2/42>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Oval by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

## SOUTH

Grace Yon

Your teeth are the Andes and they scrape along my back  
Trailing cloud scars across the winter sky.  
I stretch and a river rises, flowing South  
Toward the sea. Salt itches on your tongue.  
A bird with ice in its wings alights on my fingertips  
And its shrill voice is mist against the sunrise.

The other birds take flight, fly South,  
But this one stays with me to watch the sunrise  
In silence, our silhouettes black on newborn sky.  
We breath in unison, hardly daring to look back  
And see sharp snow-capped mountains at your fingertips,  
Unspoken words like frost beneath our tongues.

I touch soft pinions with outstretched fingertips.  
A shiver runs from my neck to the small of my back  
Like a silver fish darting toward the sunrise,  
A cloak of water pressed against the sky.  
My ice-winged brethren clicks his tongue  
And, like him, the tides are urging me South.

We flee together. At our backs the sun is rising.  
Air tastes like lavender on our tongues.  
Our shadows race across a sun-streaked sky  
And our wings flex just like fingertips.  
All the while a voice inside me screams South,  
South, and I feel your eyes fixed on my back.

Plains unfold beneath us, a flattened tongue

That tastes the horizon, savors the sunrise.  
A lupine wind howls in my ears. It calls me back,  
But my wings fill with the weightlessness of South.  
Beyond muscled plains lies nothing but sky  
So ripe and fragrant I can pluck it with my fingertips.

Now we see it—a curl of smoke, pale sky,  
Last bitter breath rising from our tongues  
And we taste South, fill our lungs with South  
Reach out and comb warm soil with our fingertips,  
Your jagged teeth just a smudge on the sunrise  
A reminder of what awaits if we go back.

We are South, and we are never coming back.  
So chew your fingertips, bite your wave-beaten tongue.  
I will be here in the sky, wingtips always brushing sunrise.