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## Making Birds

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## MAKING BIRDS

### I.

The neighbors pace the floor to  
a hole in the pine. The physicist  
cups his ear. For months  
he has been pulling white birds  
down in pieces of feather and claw.

He spends the days sewing  
grey quills to the still bodies, labeling  
throats with pen. He uses  
an eyedropper of ink. Beaks are  
molded and baked in colors.

He is asleep when the eggs,  
impossible ovals, harden  
and grow on the inside. He dreams  
of a plane that hovers in a cloud.  
He dreams of an eye in a wing.

### II.

In the eye of a wing a woman stands  
with a broom and numbers pinned  
to her dress:

This one for Our Lady of the Closet.  
This one for Our Lady of Fatima.  
This one for your shoe, black  
and too narrow, the lace  
in her palm.

He would like to hold her, to take  
her home, smooth and unleavened,

in his pocket. To feel the poplars bloom  
slow against his hands.

He does not stop when she follows  
through the streets. She rides  
in his car in a seat of hair. She rides  
above the headlights in globes.

III.

She makes a shadow of her dullness  
and sculpts her hair against the rain.  
“Tell me about the birds,” she says,  
hands fluttering, but he hears a hammering slide  
from her hem and break on the floor

where he is scrubbing. He is crawling  
under the drywall, incessantly. He feels  
his feet are glass and may break at any moment.  
Then she would have to carry him,  
a wooden bride, and stiff. Across  
every doorstep.