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Karen Craigo

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KAREN CRAIGO

ESCAPED HOUSEWIFE TAKES WORK AS TEAM MASCOT

This isn't like her. Exile is about making yourself small, blending in. She should be seated in Section J, wagging an index finger at the hog dog vendor, keeping stats on the back of her program. She has run away to disappear yet on Sundays after double-headers she is the center of attention, circling the bases, a hundred children in tow.

She dances on the dugout roof with exaggerated steps, slaps each huge yellow foot, heel to toe, against the concrete. Sometimes words come unbidden to her arms and she spells them for the crowd, which crows each letter back to her. Hers are unlikely cheers. So much for forever, they chant, their fists pumping the air.

What kind of bird is six feet tall, has plumage the color of a house on fire, makes no noise but communicates through gestures, arms as frantic as a woman drowning, legs thin and white as weathered bones?
The stadium is a cold nest.
It is her job to warm it,
to meet the open mouths
with something like comfort.
So on kazoo night she sings.
She shoves the toy deep
inside the abyss of her beak
and cuts loose, wails her plastic blues.
By the seventh inning she’s convinced
the crowd, which joins her as one brood,
not caring if they ever get back.