

Stray Crow

Once, long ago, I played the rescuer
to your lost kin, stray crow. Not ten years old,
I found a soaked near-drowned bird in the filter
of our pool. Is water memory,

the flood that bears us, stunned, into what's next?
If so, then I'm surprised that we're so calm,
one of us having flown, somehow, through time:
some cosmic rip intangible, yet near—

It must be you, because I'm all grown up
and you're still black, bright black, like polished stone
layered, engraved. You're grounded, but alive,

and if you had the power of speech, would you
bring news of that boy or, perhaps, his father
who removed you, saved, till you took flight?

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Today, I find you, tail askew, successor
or original, where you took shelter
after storms, now hobbled. Stairwell dweller
towel-caught, eyeing movement through the weave

and basket lid, you glimpse my wife (she drives
us to the Rescue in her stalwart Saturn,
having traveled time to be with me
and save you, too). What joins us is some pattern

no one knows, that prints its secret text
upon our lives... And when the sign appears,
a flaming phoenix, nailed to a post,

I know I'm in the present, not the past
from which you flew, stray crow, the ride uphill,
sun-crossed, leaf-shaded, heading into light.

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