

# The Birds: The Carrion Eaters

written by Guest Contributor | December 14, 2020



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## **I.**

You already know how I feel about crows  
and the girls they follow, crows who make  
little distinction between a worm and an eye  
plucked from a flattened stag on the interstate.

You already know what I think about making meals  
from the remains of something long dead.

And yet when I passed you in the park  
as the sky had just begun to spit  
irresolute drops from rushing clouds  
and I did not screech  
my bike to stillness  
to greet you, you still  
reached out, later, to blow on the embers  
of a blaze you left untended, to feed on  
the last bits of gristle from the clumsy doe  
you starved, though you held the cure  
to her hunger.

And yet when I passed the brilliant green feathers  
of a freshly dead hummingbird on the sidewalk  
outside my house minutes later (I already know  
what sort of omen that is), I still went inside,  
and in the dark, on my bed, with that blue-  
white glow illuminating my face—my  
frown that of a bashful ghost—I opened  
the window to answer the tap, tap, tapping  
at the glass, and I let the carrion crow  
pick at my flesh once more.

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## II.

"Seagulls would eat chicken nuggets  
if they were hungry enough!" we laugh,

~~(*"or plastic rings," we do not laugh, just  
know, even as we swipe our plastic  
cards for six ringed cans of Keystone,  
Boh, White Claw*)~~ yet little do we speak

of just how desperate,  
how hungry they become,  
how, when the moon is just so  
and the trash cans have all been purged,  
and not even fish carcasses remain for these  
honking, grey-winged carrion eaters,  
they do not need their poultry  
breaded & fried as they pick  
through the nests (*cribs!*)  
of their comrades  
to steal away  
the chick  
who'll  
least

be missed in the morning.  
~~(*So, too, do I ravage old poems  
in the dark of night, my lost  
ideas least to be remembered,  
the early gristle bites of the  
poet I might later be.*)~~

So, too, do I pick through  
the remains of you, and you  
of me, we carrion eaters, picking  
at the gristle clinging to each other's  
rotting bones, laughing  
like two seagulls  
in the morning.

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*featured photo by Brian Henry, @bbbriiannn on Instagram*