

## An Origin Story

In the beginning  
a tiny pixel spills from a marooned pelican,  
flightless wings above a shoreless sea  
sweat and dirt and stink beneath matted feathers  
a woman-bird, sweeps a hollow beak.  
In the beginning, her name is Grief.

Grief wraps herself in a buzzard shrug, goes on the road,  
blisters and black feathers lead nowhere.

Every exit a confusion  
routinely fatal.

Clouds tremble, photographs scatter  
ahead of guttering storms  
gaping with dead things.

An eternal loop,  
death of a son

death of a son, death of a son  
writhes in the center of her chest.

She only has to make it through the night.

Grief digs for a pebble to throw at the sky,  
hooks up with a low-grade headache  
plans a funeral.

Together they stomp bone flutes beneath a full moon  
smear a crimson dawn, shoot tea and whiskey

before

he orders her to repeat her god's name,  
insert fuck, shriek it again and again.

## Poetry

Grief learns to speak graffiti  
through arteries  
a record scratch, a radio screech.  
No one warns her how lonely it can be  
with nothing colourful to say.

She wraps her arms around exhaustion  
fingers sting in a search for honey,  
a chill kiss from scar angels on a winter day,  
hundreds of miles away  
her son still visits her in her dreams.

She sinks beneath a weather-beaten poplar,  
her open wounds—talismans.  
A sea urchin in her topknot offers to hide,  
nibbles at a wayward plume  
waits for Grief to rise  
from worms that wiggle in the dark.  
A ladybug tumbles from a twig.  
Grief tries to bring what is lost back to life.  
Crumpled dreams fall to autumn dust  
trees grow  
where her feathers land.  
The forest reaches out, holds her hand.  
Three crows watch  
everything that cannot be broken—  
a son's life caught  
in Grief's finger pads.