

Crows Don't Float

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Creepy cawing comes from the boughs above.
Crows' complaints and gossip
ride the wind down with black feathers.
Their litany of frustration irritates my grandmother.
She hates crows.

I always liked them; they are so much like me,
Scavengers of shiny things, they are forever
scanning the ground for treasure.
Sometimes I wonder if one ever tried to pluck
the wet, black marbles of eyes
from another crow's sockets
by mistake.

Mostly I just wonder what they think is so funny
as they cling to the highest branch and cackle
at the world.

My grandmother tells me they are dirty scavengers
that ruin her cherry trees
and eat disgusting things off the highway,
but I feel that someone has to take the job.
The world was not meant for waste,
and nature needs its garbage men too.
Grandma had to hate something, I guess,
so she picked crows.

She didn't scream when I came home
holding a snake, or a toad, or a worm.
You should have heard her holler
when I brought home a baby crow.
I wanted to raise it proper and
teach it not to be a crow.

Maybe even teach it to be something better—
something grandma would like,
like a swan or a duck.

I spent all that summer trying,
but crows don't float.

I guess if you are born a crow,
you're stuck being a crow.