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Birds

Lance Larsen

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Birds

by Lance Larsen

Sometimes it happens this way.
You get a call, or the weather turns,
and suddenly you're left feeling
the edges of an afternoon.
You wonder what you believe.
A man passes your window, a woman,
but they're like ghosts,
negatives moving across cement.
The light spins a hole above your eye.
Later you pick up what's handy—
a catalog of the finely dressed.
On page thirty-seven you see her,
a girl bundled in Icelandic wool
who reminds you of Dee Dee Meline
from junior high. You study
the rocks and the ocean spray
behind her, then ask if the sea birds
winging over the sand are real.
Do they dip like the black gulls in your head,
their wings folding and scraping?
Suddenly you want to touch her,
this girl with feathered bangs,
touch her to prove that your life is worth risk,
that things are easy, that you can,
by concentrating your breath just right,
crumple the black wings into ashes, dust.