

Rising

(based on the mythological Phoenix)

To the bird on my heart, you
Can't blaze or burn,
Hunger and yearn,
Simmer deeply into where you'll find -
The beautiful solitude.

I played echo with a mocking jay.
She isn't a jay, but we pretend.
Call and answer,
Answer and answer until...
I stop calling. Does she
Feel that loneliness
Without me?
I never hear her feather scatter -
Or settle.
Maybe she's still answering.

To the bird on my heart.
Your flames and fire look...
Far too stagnant, frozen,
Unfeeling unmoving unscathed -
What will lick if not the flame? Yet
The beating and pulsing give you
Motion. Or maybe that's my own
Answer.

One day, I'll cover you with dust.
I'll burrow deep in another heart
Of crumbles and thorns and earth,
Mahogany and oak,
Lives taken to hold another
Life taken.
Perhaps you'll rise then,
And set the grass ablaze.

Lights

(based on the Native American mythological Thunderbird)

Sounds before sight
Trembles and tremors
The beating of wings gathering
Clouds, no longer
Puffs and wisps of gentle
Mists. Just a shadow, a
Myth and legend.
Transported tongues of
Serpents he grasps,
They morph into bolting
Flashes, striking and slashing through
Amethyst skies, weeping
The drops we've longed
To taste. And oh,
How we waste.

She croons a story of
Lost and longing kings.
Plumaged and clawed
Loneliness, can he feel
The sheets of seeping water
And light, blinding and conquering
Through fragile feathered eyes.
I've never seen this bird of prey
Or is it pray, don't we wish for
What follows? The torrent and
Terror, seeping and soaring leaving
Only, only, a story.

Wings

(based on the Irish legend of the crow Badb)

I count them each day
(one, two, three)
I see the dead plumage -
Or maybe it's the crisp of
My fellows, they're wisps.
A spectrum from red and yellow
To charcoal black, and they'll be back -
Crows everywhere are equally black.

The squawking wakes me, takes me
Shakes my own white feathers until
I am nothing but freckled pink
Limbs. Phantom grey, not
Ebony, like the sharp shriek of that
Harsh black bird.
(one, two, three)
I cannot see, through the
Torrential rain of red.

There's the queen, the crone,
The crow, and I do not
Know, when the dawn began -
When the dusk entered
(one, two, three)

Days beseeched with charcoal
Eyes, she pecked them
Dizzy, kinship confused
And the blood in the moon
Foresaw and laughed.
Compact the clouds to rain
A blazing storm, and
Harvest the swords,
(one, two, three)
They sleep upon them
And drench my wings of ivory.
What irony...to be haunted -
By what scatters when
I step too close.

And she watches, and washes
My clothes and wheels
A spinning cycle of water and
Fire, and never tires for
(one, two, three)
I know she's there – circling
Disorder, stirring the chaos
When she will leave, the sharp
Stab will linger as
I begin to feather.

Hollow

(based on the Hungarian mythological bird Lidérc)

For the blackness comes the warmth -
O arms, caress me
O earth, suppress me.
Your limbs, they hold a sweet salty
Stench. Fertilize my cry. Can you
Taste me?

The dirt, so moist and
Cracks my shell. I will make
Your body bleed unwell.
You'll pray for the hollow and
Waste me.
Morph the shape. Melt
Beneath me. Feel my
Nuzzles, my nips, the
Riches wrought from the
Hands to the hen.

Idle hands, idle hands
Present me a pail,
Deception a sieve.
Sift through the grains
With ropes, and rip my spine
Without reprieve.
Bury me in the bark,
Only then -
Will you be rid of me.

Orphan

(based on the Indian legendary Orphan Bird)

Where is your mother, oh
Onyx child?
Where is the other that
Sank deep and dark
Heavy, and heart
Breaking, and shatters
The cool glass of the surface
You burst, light as air.

Where is your father my
Ivory orb? He cut the cord
And watched your feathers
Float and flap, rejoice a cry of purity,
And a shriek of regret that
Left me bereft, of my
Other that dines on earth,
While I taste the sweet pull
Of the pink flesh worm.

Where is your brother, your sister,
Another? One leaped to the surface
One seeped in the ground.
The good egg will live,
Delighted to be.
The bad egg will soak in
Sorrow and grief.
The brother or sister that
Descends to the
Depths and cracks of solitude and
You escape, your other will forget
The haze and hum, when two were none -
You must know, that there can only be
One.