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Nighthawk

Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg

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CAROL MIRRIAM-GOLDBERG
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LAWRENCE, KS 66044

Nighthawk

I.

The nighthawk stops
and falls.

I lie in the field.
She is pointed
at my chest. I am afraid
she will forget to stop,
that she will dive
through me.

She shoots down,
catches an insect in her mouth
without stopping.

I try to stand, but my hair
is tangled in the winter
grass, white and stiff.

Underneath the worms and twigs,
the soil fills with air. I call
your name, my body still
in the trail of light
from your white skin.

II.

Would I love you
like the little mermaid
who'd turn to seafoam
for a chance at the prince?

Would I rescue you
from the broken ship
and carry your body,
limp as clothing,
in the waves
until I could lay you
on the pier, my hair
falling all over
your face?

CAROL WILKINSON-GOLDBERG
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Deep in the sea, I once had
a garden I planted in the shape
of a man. It floated up
into the wreck.
How do I tend it now?
My hair, my voice — both traded
to the witch for a chance
to walk on human legs,
the blade of my tail
searing up into the soles
of my feet as I touch
the land for the first time.

III.

All around, the nighthawks dive
almost into the surface, saying,
"I wish, I wish."
Surely some must fail,
their bodies cracked
in the ground.

I go to the ridge for you.
I do not want to turn to seafoam
or wishes around the sleeping
head of the prince.

I want to find you
and soar
through your body,
the moving twigs and worms,
the moving dirt underneath,
all unravelling in the heat.

I will watch the nighthawks
and do as they do,
my body almost
breaking on the surface
of the earth, gliding
above you without touching.