

## Heron Song

Mornings, the heron descends to shore.  
His silver wings crescendo the air,  
fermata—then fold, seeking the sleek  
curve of his body. He comes to stand

by the shore and wet his feet. To watch  
the waves. Once, he snaps an eel  
with his beak, its shoestring body  
twisting like a pendulum.

He grips it like a surgeon, sure  
and still, patient, waiting while  
it undulates, waiting while  
it loosens, finally going limp.

Then—he flicks his head, snaps  
his jaws to slide it down in one,  
two, three slow beats.  
But mostly, he stands, gazing out

over the bay. He is still,  
contemplative. I wonder what  
reflections swirl in his walnut brain:  
watching the clouds for certain wings.

Wondering why the water turns  
from calm chartreuse to cinnamon.  
Marks that water, the collective,  
isn't quite the word for

a million facets of light and shadow.  
Or, listening to the rhythm  
of the waves, if he's counting  
out the measure of his creation.

—Elizabeth Garcia

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This poem won an honorable mention in  
the 2016 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest.