

2 poems

Zoë Landale



Red Feathers



What door



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Red Feathers

This afternoon she is so light with loss
she could fly downstream
parallel to grey water, tidal,
the weak path of sun,
a sand crane with that red slap

teetering in the new place

shock of red

Japanese good luck across her feathers.

home has wings, keeps shifting

Too much loss. The full year distorts
like wax in sun.

she balances like an exhausted skater,
drooping over ice

She bends, gives as much attention
to the coarse ruffle of unfolding elderberry leaves
as the moment will bear.
Then a cap of moss on a fence post.

green, see how perfect each filament?

Significant details.

This morning she watched the dark eyebrows
of a man three pews down from her,
wondered if he was single, wept.
at the back, the clean
smell of him

her love's hair

Death has such a strong burn
perhaps after a while it would be possible
to miss it.

the dead talk back, you know

Grace, pale as the crane's underside.
Lightness, those are the beige wings,
the everyday strength that makes it possible
to lift, air sliding cool, pushing up.

she walks, works, keeps
a clean house



Red Feathers 2

Joy. That's the impossible one,
scarlet attachment, the heart delighting
in its lubba lubba of life.

Weightless as paper she floats
the river path in mild white afternoon;
little holds her.
Moment by moment, she's left with the puzzle

terrestrial motion, the ground.

she'd settle for a spirit that didn't
whirl round like the vortex in a bath
drain

how is it you do this?



What Door

The woman lunges from a dried-up pond
runs for a red coat to save her.

passion of an arrow arcing toward
the target

In the woods, what door will open?

Her family watch from the forest edge;
they don't believe she is able to pass
through or even in.
Only her rough-coated hound follows.
If she stayed, the wind would own her.

unseen, bending master of desiccation

In the woods, what door will open?

something must give; she
doesn't realize until years
later, it was her

By the Koksilah river she was arid. A crack of stone
held her. She couldn't love more.

split-
ting

All she had she'd emptied, it was not enough
and the longing would not leave.

Gold bound and burned until she took
off her ring and hid it in a cup of green clay.

She wanted the hunter but he was never hers.

to him, she was game

Do you hear, husband? Since you cannot hold her
she is running to the firs. dark & what door?

What's vowed has been set aside.
It's no longer a question.



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