

The Second Gull

MARY MARGRETTE SCHORTEMEIER

And the sea mew
The scavenger, the unclean,
Made clean by an unclean that ransomed,
According to its kind made new
In rare beauty.
Descending bird, salt crested,
Dropping down, circling spirit
An offering made in death's duty
Gave life to man
And freed the gull from holy curses.
And the whiteness of the second gull
The man will praise whene'er he can
To the wedding guest.

LUCY KAUFMAN

We, having known harrowing hunger's pain
through desperate days of drifting, unassured
of rescue, doubtful of reaching land again,
were grateful when we saw the long-winged bird.
Around our raft he circled cautiously,
then came aboard within our reach. He stood
a fellow voyager in strange company.
But he, perhaps surmised our need of food.

Monotonous dawns moved out of the east and drifted
across the vast Pacific leisurely,
and slow suns sombered their lamps and sifted
from unknown corners of a western sea.
Then with silver pinnions pounding space.
with feet that trailed the sun, with wings that laughed,
another gull with unintended grace,
swept down toward us, and stopped upon our raft.

We, still rocked by harrowing hunger's pain,
unassured of being rescued still,
found, in a moment we could not explain,
the second gull too beautiful to kill.