

Parable of the Ducks

One stands at the edge if the canal,
just where the water and grass meet,
shakes her brown feathers from her neck to the tip of her tail
as she waits.

Standing at the top of the slope (just before the ground heads down
angled toward the water) is a green duck, a beautiful deep green.
He twists his neck backwards and dives his beak into a nibbling
focused on an itch that doesn't subside for two minutes.

She can't see him, but she knows he is up there; she won't
go into the water without him. He knows
she is waiting, and although his itch has been relieved
he discovers bread crumbs in the grass. He pecks at the leftovers
with a casual nonchalance, unhurried and indifferent.

Other ducks are swimming already; brown ducks white ducks green
ducks black ducks gray ducks, headed in rows of clumps organized by color-
She still doesn't go in, and I want to shout at her,
tell her not to wait for him...but she wouldn't listen if I did. Even though
he's a no good duck and she knows it too;
even though she wants to swim with all the ducks-
she complacently sits and waits as he fills his belly on crumbs
he doesn't really want and doesn't want to share and she still waits.

-Melanie Carter

Selma, Alabama

They picked him up
and quietly spread him out
over the city
in red white blue poor
Jimmy Lee Jackson
with your brains blown out
you will be remembered
by this hole in my stomach
I'm digesting this
ageless hate
And fighting the ghosts who hang
the confederate flag
over those southerner's eyes.
Even the black folks.

-Brea Thomas

All else failing

I think
That at least
My poems could always fly
In paper airplanes.
The precise creases forming a body
Around the poem,
Serving as the vehicle
Which will carry my poems to the world.
Could be worse for a young poet,
At least.

-Nicholas Reading