

**HERO(I)N**

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I thought it was a bird. Skimmed rush. Hush as before a fowl fixes

its head up from shadow water

sickened by its own nature, narcissus-

reversed. unfortunate predatory

consequence. the luck. heron spots two ducklings nesting on an outcrop

of rocks.

Swift-like. heron bounces off the lake, a hollowed pebble. in one swallow

babes go

down. pulsing inside heron's throat until they succumb. mama

mallard squawks and plods—helpless, she flies low

away. how long do mother ducks mourn— until the next day

next month, until pitch pines

shake barren

or a naked beggar shakes on his kitchen floor like

breccia in a rain stick, begging: *2 bird bags, 4 quarters, 1 gram?* His daughters

empty cupboards, offer open tin at his feet—*eat, eat*—until

heron comes. when sick,

fowl fit in veins like ducks in necks—vortex of sorts.

some knew this.

yet, none bothered to explain how

hero(i)n

made him fly

why hero(i)n

well, less starved

made him