

Emergent Poet

Yvonne Murphy

Landscape With Birds

. . . *in looking at some apparently small object, one feels the swirl of great events.*
–William Carlos Williams on the poetry of Marianne Moore

The rutted field holds treasure in its grooves, every day
before Spring, crows pack into the hedgerows like balcony seats,
watching, silently applauding my search. Golf balls, pendants,
bent forks and spoons, metal bits of machines, fragments from bottles,
windshields, watch parts.

Corvus brachyrhynchos, the American crow, all-black,
gleaming purple, onyx, smoky pearl in the sunlight.
How they rise from the edge of the field in their tri-corn hats
and black capes, keepers of wise counsel, countersinging:
omissions are not accidents, with their harsh rattles and caws.

Picking and choosing, I gather marbles, rusted cans, old keys,
chips of porcelain, combs, nails, pebbles in the bright white sun.
Before planting, I pluck accumulations from the soil— these takings
in my pockets, cache of seeds, insects, broken eggshells and shotgun
casings, a dead mouse molting with a layer of fuzz, the mimicry of crows.

I half-expect Miss Moore, Celtic Morrigan, Phantom Queen to rise
out of the furrows, appearing as a hooded crow, goddess of regeneration,
shape-shifter poised to devour, her battle signs reflected on the glossy
backs of birds as I forage, plunder, alert to my fate, this constant
discernment with *love's extraordinary-ordinary stubbornness*.