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### Poem by Mara Adamitz Scrupe

Finalist for the 2019 Talking Writing Prize for Poetry



### Reliquiae Flyway

starting with the thumbnail heart nut  
hard gather of splinter wood  
fungus of soft rot  
she lays out her tools of dissection

scalpel-fitted blades 12's & 20's  
forceps & curved scissors  
squared on her diagram:  
she's routing the long Atlantic Flyway

supposing we are all saltwater  
cloudburst's accretions collected  
gully-washers tasting of tin &  
figment quickened rivulets  
she considers reversing  
death to birth / foul to pure  
bodies down-breathed to marsh sedge  
turned mud-plaster & razor-edge *considering*

she thinks we are each  
*each creature* our own reach stretched to capture  
graced or graceless    amen    amen    succored  
amen in this high making back to life        *amen amen*  
as though fine & potent  
                 translates flight to her fingers  
she considers        wondering  
what can it mean to translate

word-for-word movement  
for movement &  
if she wanted could she dart & sail & dive  
stumble the root-caved  
walk / plucked fallen / feeling reflexively in  
its motility she pains  
         & pleasures with it for it recalling  
its qualms & resistance  
         & blessings she makes herself over

allies herself forever  
with fox sparrow against albatross's & cormorant's  
& heron's amaranthine capacities / boned wing bars  
endemic or not / Horus the bird  
         -head not dust nor ashes  
nor spun upward not  
braced & chamfered / polished sheeny in fetch

         & mount & accumulate & display  
but street birds trusting the first hunch  
*amen*  
         skeptics' cold-cored guts in clean sheeting  
vestigial / piled unwashed unembalmed  
her moss-filled bodies sewn bright  
& tight in warmth  
in triple-stranded embroidery

cottons & silks  
amen    *Amen*

         she sees herself sutured  
in white work bird breast

## Reliquiae Flyway

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stuffed & padded in patterned dog star & fern  
couched in long & satin stitches  
        French knots & touch-me-not thistles  
in cobweb markings preserved  
        by convent sisters proud enough  
not to want to disappear        she considers herself

        an artist of innuendo she imagines  
praise in her flight  
—flushed & febrile—of the sort that only  
        comes with experience / passementeries  
of shrubland & woods & wetlands & the millions  
        we are on land on foot looking up  
stunned en masse congregants        fledged  
of this fragile coastline



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Mara Adamitz Scrupe is the author of six poetry collections, including most recently *In the Bare Bones House of Was* (2019 Brighthorse Press Book Prize) and *Eat the Marrow* (Erbacce Press, 2019). She has won or been shortlisted for the Grindstone Literary International Poetry Competition, Fish Poetry Prize, BigCi Environmental Writing Fellowship, Aesthetica Award, Erbacce Prize, The Plough Prize, Ron Pretty Poetry Prize, Periplum Book Award, Sentinel Quarterly Book Award, Stiwdio Maelor Prize, Cornwall Festival Competition, University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor's Award, and National Poetry Society Competition.

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