

## Pelicans

Something in the slow gait of their wings says  
fuck you. They don't mind dominating the scene.  
A grey silk estuary of fine boned terns,

spoonbills, black swans from a chocolate box  
and the pelicans crash into my line of vision  
like a gunship, tilting the landscape off its axis.

One dwarfs the top of a lamp post. Odd, but  
nothing like a circus elephant forced to  
balance on a piano stool, the applause

worse than jeers and no chance of escape, not  
even the feel of earth beneath her feet.  
When I was a girl I was too large;

by ten I was built on a different scale  
entirely to the approved models,  
the little slips of things, slivers of

pink with lips and tidy hair, no scabs.  
I blundered around the playground  
with all the grace of Godzilla but none

of his confidence. There's a flinty mob  
in me that wants to join in the laughter  
but I don't see the Lamb of God in the pelican,

that old Catholic symbol has it wrong.  
She'd never let herself be nailed to a cross  
or scratch open her heart to feed her chicks.

Who would feed them tomorrow, then? No, the  
bloom on her chest just a mess of spewed fish;  
something in the slow gait of their wings says.

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