

Holocene

by Yuna Kang

Two people who mourn the crows differently; one in face paint and
red white keffiyeh, a slight recrimination in their stance- and we knew,

all these things were different and the same; resounding traumas vibrating,
worlds away- the same world. Crows swarmed their figure, trespasser, stranger-

moving the body of the deceased away from its fall. Swaddling it, as if it were
precious baby- don't hold it, I said rudely, habitual pistons firing- and

they shrugged me off. I had placed swarms of nasturtiums around the
dead, orange and yellow clutter, and these the stranger held in their

scarf, with the bird, reminiscent of a graveyard bouquet. "I

was wondering about that," they told me briefly, high

above, I can hear the sharp wail of alarm, too similar to a mother-
I resent anthropomorphizing- but the sound instigated ice currents in

my bones, birds of the dead, screaming a lonely, final song. I
knew this bird, trickster bird, as I have known the others- I

talk to them, accept their gifts. Feed them peanuts. Leave
them alone, I want to beg the keffiyeh bearer, leave them to grieve-

and maybe I was right. Or maybe it was our lawn, our sun, our
world we shared- inhabitants in possession of the same goal, to thrive, with

bated breath running through this trap we call a body, boned bodice leaking
in, keeping in those precious fluids and vitalities that surround by which we know

is a soul, and I know that the crows have a soul- and I have a soul, and
so did the grieving stranger, and Gaza is re-meeting its nascent terrain, and

the ozone layer is done healing, and the sun is developing a new bite. Bees by
the thousands crawl into traffic, mite-addled and old. In North Richmond, someone

is sniping away at local birds with a pellet gun. A man discreetly pees on the road-

there are no public restrooms anymore. No bathrooms, no guns, no history, no
laws, the things that govern us- unmistakable- contradictory- is

it a violation to hold a dead bird, to divorce it from the mourning land? Is
it unsacred to decorate its body with invasive blooms, let it to rot in dry apple
sun? Some of us knew, once.