

LEARNING YOUR OWN

After ages of squinting  
into the white whelm of clouds  
suspected of music just beyond  
the surface if only you  
could get close enough to hear it,  
you suddenly see the birds:  
Grace notes from the highest scale,  
tumbling from the treble staff.  
Maybe they were there in the beginning,  
dreaming their wings,  
but you believe they arrived this moment  
with songs of forgiveness.

They free fall, arc and gyre then pose  
as finials on posts of light.  
Vibrato of tenors and sopranos  
holding at the top of their registers,  
mindless of time or breath,  
they soar again on vowels  
of exultation. Soon they orbit the sun,  
then return, dipped in cerulean,  
trailing fire from their tertials, turning  
at eye-level until you recognize them,  
sing them-- your own human joy:  
Anthems free of the brain's dim cage.

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--Glenna Holloway