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Attitude

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Attitude

They have one, Mute Swans do.
A local, plumed of ballet and fairy tale,
cruises my wind-chopped pond,
tracks me from the corner of her eye,
turns her whole self, not to lose sight.

Land-bound as I am, she knows
I'll advance only to the reeds
at the edge and so patrols just near.

On land, I know she'd arch her neck,
nip my sneakers, hiss, wag her tongue,
but here, she reserves the royal ruckus
for the one swan daring to drift
too close, for the one who will receive
the wing-slapping runaround all the way
across the water, out of the water,
into the pines on the far shore.

She feels no force to join any noisy wedge
withdrawing south. She stays, eager
to fend off fox, fisher cat, snapper, all intruders.
A northern *conquistadora*.

Ann Taylor

ANN TAYLOR's first poetry book, *The River Within*, won first prize in the 2011 Cathlamet poetry competition at Ravenna Press. A chapbook, *Bound Each to Each*, was published by Finishing Line Press in 2013. Her most recent collection, published by Word Tech Press in 2018, *Héloïse and Abélard: The Exquisite Truth*, is based on the famous twelfth-century story of their lives. Her most recent collection, *Sortings*, was published in 2020 by Dos Madres Press. She teaches at Salem State University in Salem, Massachusetts.