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Birding Sabah

Marcyn Del Clements

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Birding Sabah

Borneo
17 March 2013

Early and late the tailorbird sings: tica tica tica tica,
sound of my heartbeat slowing. Given my age,
the pace of this green adventure—early rising,

bolted meals, evening safaris in the boat, entropy
of stars—what are the chances I'll die here?
If I do, let the mountain serpent eagle take

my ashes in its talons over Mount Kinabalu,
shower them across the forest and dust
the faces of rafflesia, world's largest flower,

color of pale chicken dung. And when
it begins to open and spread its
nauseating fragrance of decomposing flesh

across the forest floor, let the tiny tree shrews
stretch in their lairs, shake, trundle to feast
as the flower opens to the evolutionary sun.

Marcyn Del Clements

IN 2013 MARCYN DEL CLEMENTS traveled to Borneo on a birding expedition; there, she saw the rafflesia. In 2019, she returned to Borneo to visit Kinabalu National Park and climb on Mount Kinabalu, 13,435 feet, at the age of 79. Marcyn Del Clements' poems and prose have appeared in *Appalachia* for many years.