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Herons at Sapsucker Woods

Polly Brown

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Herons at Sapsucker Woods

Their wide woven bowl of sticks sails
high in a white oak snag. She has sat
for hours, and honks in answer to his returning
honk; scraping, jubilant sounds
they exchange to claim each other.

Long ago, their earliest kin
traded two limbs for wings. As he settles,
she sidesteps along a branch,
hops to another, leaps, lets those wings
(the color of sky before thunder) take over.

The other side of the pond, she wades
on two stilts hardly there, with a gait, at a pace,
you might use for a funeral march
or a wedding. So it lasts?
To make no ripple: to provide.

No arms, and no bag but her belly
to hold fish pincered from the shallows.
Inside her now, fish stew. She flies to the snag,
where chicks beg; her neck arches
with effort to haul the catch back.

One nestling gets less; she chopsticks
a last chunk his way. She has squatted
above them in snow, in wind, in rain.
Now she stands with wings outspread,
heron as sunshade, queen.

Polly Brown

POLLY BROWN, of the Boston-area Every Other Thursday Poets, is the author of *Each Thing Torn from Any of Us* (Finishing Line Press, 2008) and *Pebble Leaf Feather Knife*, to be released by the Cherry Grove imprint of WordTech Communications in 2019. She has written about war and peace at the University of Massachusetts Boston's Joiner Institute and has organized plein air poetry events on her Massachusetts hillside.