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Hiking the Florida Panhandle in March

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Hiking the Florida Panhandle in March

a snapping turtle family below the bridge
treads water, lifting heads to watch us watching back

a copperhead curled in sun on a mudflat
blinks once as our shadows pass

we lift our glasses to that stroke of gold in the marsh —
a stick becomes a bittern, motionless and fishing

two knobby green-gold streaks in the weedy water —
alligator backbones, ending in eyes and snouts

in the pale blue sky, maples leaf out, their tongues
of red flame flickering

Robin Chapman

ROBIN CHAPMAN is the author of nine poetry books, most recently *Six True Things* (Tebot Bach, 2016). She is recipient of *Appalachia's* 2010 Poetry Prize. Her poems have appeared recently in *Flyway*, *Poetry East*, and *Terrain*, among other journals.