

Ricardo Pau-Llosa

Odds

Double its species norm, or thrice,
a great egret combs my slow garden,
neck and head the very fraud of reed
in the willow wind, picking off
the dozed lizard and the rock-still toad.

The size of a woman, or of the shadow
common specimen cast on freeway slopes
or the medians of turgid avenues.
It reigns, the golden beaked and eye,
ignoring the longanimous postman
and me quiet in my dead car
holding the wheel two-handed
as if desire might steer the beast
of awe to make a home on my lawn
and ground the miracle.

Among liriopoe and bougainvillea
and bird of paradise, prey
in frozen hues among the brotherly shades
hope in their way, too,
the white scythe has reached his plenty,
or that his eye might fail, or
the muscled branch of his leg might crack.

Scared into a jeweled tightness,
they get their wish at mine's expense,
and the bird saunters toward the neighbor's
cream caladiums and a blush
of blue plumbago. His neck crooked
into the outline of an ear. But hunger
has no music, only craft.

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Ricardo Pau-Llosa

Ricardo Pau-Llosa has published seven books of poetry, the last five with Carnegie Mellon U Press. His work has appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Ambit*, *Boston Review*, *December*, *Ekphrasis*, *Hudson Review*, *New England Review*, *PN Review*, *Poetry*, *Stand*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, among other journals. He is also an art critic and curator.