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Somatic Exercise & Poem: Cormorant Stagecraft Thank You For Mixing With My Emotional Circuitry

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(SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISE & POEM

CORMORANT STAGECRAFT

—for Caitlin LaCourse Ryan and Kepler-22b

*“Venturing into the sun to smoke
I am proof of nature and all its declarations.”*

—Ariana Reines

Kitten is my favorite spirit animal, a totem to conquer my various forgivable, discordant planes of constriction. But it is the cormorant I surrender to for my most morbid of human needs. A cormorant DIVES into subconscious water-worlds to resurface somewhere new, and agitates my soul into happiness. When I was a boy I yearned for webbed fingers and toes, and was grateful to Benjamin Franklin for inventing swim flippers. Telling Ryan Eckes about this new (Soma)tic exercise he said, “That’s what I try to do with every poem, I try not to drown.”

What animal will you require yourself to meet for this exercise? I wore nylon stockings on my hands, then DOVE into the morning ocean off Virginia Beach, American fighter jets howling across the coastal trails, deafening the gulls, frightening the dolphins, and me. Eggs in the sand, nest in the dunes, a wind where all instruction flattens my eager crest. Love in a cormorant call compels a vibratory trance throughout a feral heart, lungs, liver.

Draw eight pictures of your spirit animal in different phases of your enactment of their lives. On the back of each write a message. Write a bit of confession from the bird, hippo, or alligator you choose to be. Create an email account for this exercise to include at the end of the message. Leave the pictures on the subway, in the bathroom at a museum, or on the counter at a coffee shop. Anyone who writes you must receive your animal's reply. Your animal correspondence is YOUR TRUE correspondence! All your notes from the exercise are for the poem(s) you will create.

THANK YOU FOR MIXING WITH MY EMOTIONAL CIRCUITRY

rollercoasters are
my favorite form of
transportation

what is bribery
in poetry going
to prove?

pluck me out
of my gown
throw me
against your song

I claim a hundred feet of
air above
my head

a murmur of sparrows
flies in flies out keeping
me nauseous with love
 making use
of tiny instruments
needing their
music absorbed

HOW DARE

the mayor of

Philadelphia refuse

our collective joy of

rollercoasters

over buses

tally your

math again

I love being a

statistic involving

spun sugar on a stick

and instability

counted upwards

of a thousand

drops of saliva

we can read

ANYTHING

go out and read

the engine's cold

throttle left over

night in one

position

love came

breathing

against me I did not

mind the captivity

elevating these
harmed avionics
of the brain
climbING the track
ROARing downhill
reborn through the S-curve

the extortion of poetry
an opera mounting
the bed sheets we
won't stop it when
we know we must

my critical review of
your little daisy staring
staring staring staring
STARING until it grows