

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 2

June 2011

Crow Justice

Sherman Alexie

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Recommended Citation

Alexie, Sherman (2011) "Crow Justice," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol11/iss1/2>

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Alexie: Crow Justice

**CROW
JUSTICE**

**SHERMAN
ALEXIE**

As I pump gas, a flock of crows passes
overhead. Then another flock arrives,
and another, and a third, fourth, and fifth.
Jesus, the sky itself is made of crows,
and they're louder than the nearby freeway.
Could this be a family reunion?
Maybe these dark birds are planning for war.
Then, with one great hush, the flock goes silent,
and separates into living currents,
and forms winged rivers around a mid-air
island of three quickly deserted crows.

Why? I don't know at first, but then one bird,
much larger than the rest, breaks from the flock,
quickly followed by other large, fast birds,
and leads a mass-attack on the lost crows
and snap-snap-snaps their necks, and as they fall,
tears them in half. As the crow-pieces hit
hot pavement, the flock, as one, celebrates.

Yes, they celebrate. And I realize
that I saw a public execution.

A murder of crows, indeed, but what crimes,
among the crows, are punishable by
death? I can't begin to understand crow
morality. Hey, I don't want to try,
but justice, like time, flies and flies and flies.

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