

Elegy: Noah's Crow · John Witte

A crow crosses the sky opening and closing
his black double doors. People go through.
The invisible river, the wind flows past
snatching trees off its banks. The crow
lands rocking a flexible branch. He re-
covers his balance. He looks out:

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Are you still dead? Are you somewhere
shoveling mud for the Highway Department?
Or have you finally quit, telling them all
where they can go on their new Interstate,
and gone home, and rested in a hot bath,
and taken your good woman Kelly into your arms.

I couldn't go to the funeral. I couldn't see you
pieced together in your parents' faces. No one
remembered you being there anyway.

If the telephone rings I think
I'll hear your voice far off,
very hoarse from the cold.

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I remember Noah's crow, the one chosen
to leave the ark and fly out
over the ocean. Too soon
a tiny bird working
between sky and water he found nothing.
No olive branch, no dry land, *nowhere*
to rest the sole of his foot.

He was simply not mentioned again.

I want to believe he waited for Noah
on Mount Ararat.
He scraped his beak on a stone.
He watched the door of the ark
to let something out into this silence,
something with a voice, something with flesh,
with fur, with scales. He welcomed them all,
the dazzled animals, calling and calling them
back to the ruined earth.