

Black-Feathered Eisegesis

Her stake is old: she was stretching her wings
over the water before anyone

thought of saying there was only one God.
Long before Noah asked her to take

part in a myth that she didn't want.
Raven has a legitimate claim to being

one of the most important figures in the Bible.
What makes your proof

-text more valid than hers?
All this time, you may have been misreading:

one has to at least admit the possibility.
Your whole religion, & the philosophical

underpinnings of your entire culture—
the hole in your religion,

& your culture's philosophical pinions—
dark wings covering your eyes.

River

...some days may he swim happily in the Big Blue River,
even if his deepest maps always know...

– Brian Bartlett, *Ringing Here & There: A Nature Calendar*

A wide crowded hallway of water. White ripples
through brown, the colour of snow bubbles to the surface

and interrupts the silty conversation as if old glaciers
would remind young mud of the past.

Beneath the surface talk is less polite, with no sun
to moderate and an occasional sharp elbow of wood.

River-foam and back-eddies tell dirty jokes about plastic
bags and aluminum cans that end with floating slicks of oil.

Beneath the surface the music becomes louder,
cacophonous, carries an undercurrent of danger.

Meltwater speaks fast syllables of mountain heights,
and wind and ice, and the earth replies slippery and gritty:

stones on the bottom remember deep time, and loam
and jetsam drift past with songs of seasons and trees.

On the surface, and on the shore nearby, are birds
that speak other languages and give their attention

to entirely different songs, with no concern
for the human child who thinks he is drowning.

