

## JULES BOYKOFF / Ode to Working Group II

When the seagulls follow a trawler, it's because they think  
sardines will be thrown into the sea. Thank you very much.

—ERIC CANTONA

a flock of sandpipers in the freshly flooded marsh  
a host of oaks tilting toward recognition  
a hundred herons poking out from the muck  
an avalanche of stones multiplying in the mountains  
an eagle hunkered on a branch in the fog  
another attack by a smack of jellyfish  
another urban heat island on fat slabs of cement  
a pika in the mine of our changing climate  
a pelican hunched along the iron tracks  
a solitary raven in the stone-gray sky  
a thimble of ginger to settle her cough  
a thousand catastrophes blooming under the sun  
autumn brought ferocious dreams of fire  
bald eagles decimating colonies of cormorant  
bats flapping before a mountainous full moon  
because not all certainty is created equal  
because some people like it the way it is  
crick glistening beneath a thundering sun

death did not mean the end of the relation  
drought so bad they prayed for hurricanes  
“Finally, he said with satisfaction, it’s an earthquake.”  
fire thrumming heat through the peat underground  
fists of iced oats beneath a half-moon sky  
flames leapt across the crowns of trees  
glacial lakes where ice vacates space  
he called it “a perfectly safe pipeline”  
he lived in the city when it went underwater  
hurricanes swirling from the earth’s rotation  
I have a joke I’ve been trying to tell you  
I’ve tried so hard to mend these regrets  
in the abundance of water, this chalky land  
islands firing from the center of the earth  
it takes six days to cut down a mountain  
like a full-grown woodpecker who keeps on pecking  
like scratches and scars in a glacier’s wake  
more paper permits punching holes in the seabed  
my anxiety rippling like a rusty river  
my mind a permafrost region of sorts  
my mouth a graveyard of past indiscretions  
my theories all crammed in a cold metal box  
refinery flares hidden by the curve of the earth

she snapped photos of things I just couldn't see  
shrugging my own private glacier-to-slush pill  
smacks and smacks of jellyfish clogging the water  
solar panels at sunrise, wind turbines by night  
something about the barn's feathery weathering  
stop signs flapping like flags in a haboob  
suppressing cirrus clouds on the meeting's agenda  
that solitary daisy in a field of green  
that's when I started to notice the birds  
the Cascades that spiny range to the west  
the fallen snow made the clear-cut clearer  
the ruffle of a scrub jay's wings on landing  
they developed their film in the mighty Rheine  
though the bus rolled off, I kept on waving  
tornados not just columns of air in rotation  
torrents of rain— islands washed to the sea  
two geese ensconced on a column for power  
'Virtue's no business model,' he said on the air  
we didn't do anything for just one reason  
we measured our time through artificial snow  
wet, wet weather—season's cadence out of sync  
what touched the river must be washed today  
when flattery's no antidote to calm the roiling sea

when not taking sides meant taking the wrong one  
when red-winged blackbirds rained from the sky  
when the earth's chassis starts buckling under  
when the ground held firm with the promise of profit  
when the reset button cannot be punched  
where green meant a chemical, a flavor, a flow  
where one tectonic plate pressed under another  
where rock dust tempered the explosive load  
where we try to live in the Cascadian Zone  
where wind turbines swirl with the heat of the future  
wild, wild weather not jarring the mind  
Williams' fleshpale smoke in the brickstacked sky  
Wishbone in a chicken—the luck of other lands

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