

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

### **A Bird Black As The Sun**

#### **California Poets on Crows & Ravens**

Editors: Enid Osborn, Cynthia Anderson

Green Poet Press 2011 \$15.00

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*review by Irene Koronas*

"...Who ever would have dreamed  
the broad winged raven of despair  
would quit the air and go  
bandylegged upon the ground,  
a common crow?" Kay Ryan

There are ten sections in this anthology of black birds, ranging between muse and joker, and over eighty California poetic sightings. This compilation has different styles and views relating to ravens and crows. Each poet relates, connects to these intelligent creatures, such as Lisl Auf der Heide:

"...and when the mountains turn blue  
with the haze of evening  
the crows lift off in ebony formation  
head toward some roost  
where they can blend into night"

Philip Levine's poem, "The Three Crows," carries us to his Aunt Tsipie. Tsipie would speak to the crows perched on the last tree in her neighbor's yard:

"...For minutes on end the three crows listened  
and gave nothing in return. I could say  
to all those who live in God's green kingdom..."

Ellaraine Lockie encounters crows, "more like the threat of thunder... plunged into memory." There are many personal poems,

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poets living with crows and ravens, entering our reading life and leaving us realizing how important our connections are, as in this poem by Ann Stanford:

“Black and serious, they are dropping down one by one to the top  
of the walnut tree.

It is spring and the bare branches are right for a conversation.  
The sap has not risen yet, but those branches will always be bare  
Up there, crooked with ebbled life lost now, like a legal argument  
They shift a bit as they settle into place...”

The crow flies with metaphor. We the readers flock  
to the writings and are lead on a journey of discovery and delight.  
We peck at the offerings, hoping to glean a bird’s eye view.  
Who would want to miss Michael Hannon’s flight of words:

“Though friendly to magic  
I am not a man disguised as a crow.

I am night eating the sun.”

Irene Koronas

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