



The swan
shunned
stars, stuck
square to the
shadows. Twist
of a fool's
tongue, she
drifted, listless.
This is a tale of
warning, this trial,
this is a trial of
mourning and then
morning and warming off
the mounting trail.

Beware
your
familiar,
they are
your most
despicable
ideas. We
can start this
again, smooth
out the beak's
crease. You'll
marry a gunner,
when fate fails.

If we go up
together, my
love, we would
never come back.
If we had gone up
together. There is
a rare bird near
upon the land.

Brilliant
again the
moon-tides
flit along the
mountain top.
Maddened, bored,
dropped. The rain
lake or its gaze set to
stun. What is a sadness
once set to sea? There is a
rare bird, she once was you.

Brilliant
and the
moon-
tides bit
along the
crater's
bottom.
Shaping,
making
baby boulders
swallow hard.
The mountain
black of the lake
an eye flat as dread.
Solipsism set soft
now, dark swept.
I am a man upon the
land. There is a rare
bird near at hand.

At eventide
I shuffled
down into the
reeds. Plicked
a cat-tail and
pointed it,
tensed for the
shift. A fat little
fawn, the night
came on. The moon
a milk mouth in a
bath of black ash. I am
a man upon the land.

Soundlessly I spied her,
between the seventh splash.
The static of white shifting in
the moon reeds. Will you deny
that everything we see is made
an iris? Will you deny it is all
surrounded and blank?

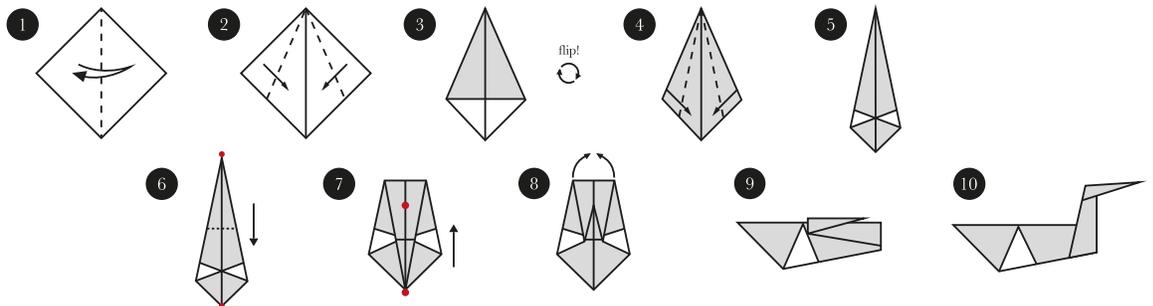
When she drew near, I stood, cat-tail
to shoulder, and steadied the line. This is
a sawed-off shotgun, I said, this is serious.
She blinked without batting an eyelash.
I loved her, then. Like when the Sea-Captain
sailing his ship face to the wind, stumbles
up the white shore slope and discovers
dream logic, all damned.

Too late. She broke into wedding cake, wandering.
Got flexed by an onyx knife, dipping at Eskimo Neck,
Alaska. Dispersed into a white white fog draining low
along the dregs. I took her for a prayer, for a bed of
baby's breath, braced by the water's edge. Cupping up a
headful of damp sand, I whispered into it, "What does a
lake look like, to a doe?" I let the ink breath slip.
I tied the white apron round me, in mourning,
the light squeaked evilly in the east.
I should've known then: She is a seaswan of the sea.

I was aware of playing a role. The palace walls
flats. The script scrapped. I would go up, just
as I had sent you down. We both would bow.
This wasn't long before I killed them all. All the
fasifiable sulkers, all the fornicators, all besides
me and the swan. All inside my dream. Then the
jury raised the blame up. I wished you to see our
heavenly fathers, shuffling in those silly silks.
Before the hanging, my ghost, your funeral, before the truth
and the forgiveness, and everyone knew everything or
only that I was a shore-rambler, and sorry so. There was
no night to hide me. They came round, that they did do.
Isn't this prosody punishment enough?

by ZACH DODSON
The Swan

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FOLD FIRST, READ SECOND. Tear the bottom portion of this page off, follow the instructions, keeping the printed side out. Then, let the story unfold.