

When All Around Us Sky and One Perpetual Flame

Then we must allow for answers in clouds, their shadows covering half the prairie. Or crows, swooping in and out of sunlight, searching for a perch. Yes, we could leave this place for another—build again by sea, let salt lick our lips, rub our eyes raw—but we'd miss the sweet nesting of storks on the phone-pole beside the landfill. How silent our lives without the hammering clatter of their bills before sunrise, the smell of loss rotting behind our house. Watching them land, pick through chicken heads, sausages, fish skins, their ballet of wing splay and turn, the gentle tug of their bills as they pull apart, lift their necks, and swallow. The delicate flight back to brood, disgorging of food, the nestlings eager to eat. Why should they leave this place? Already winter's unfurling, clouds shrinking from the sun, the sky just as everywhere as always. Settling has little to do with impossible walls. The weight of its chains are heavier.

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