

# One for Sorrow

by Carmel Buckingham



A crow once gifted me  
pine needles tucked into a paperclip.  
She left it on my windowsill, right beside  
the birdfeeder. I think about love languages,  
about how long it's been since I've felt  
the smooth warmth of another's skin,  
firm muscle wrapped around me,  
heavy and solid and safe.

Did you know crows can recognize faces?  
She definitely knows me, she lets me get close,  
she's brought me more gifts—a Stella Artois  
bottle cap, a glittering earring, a screw head,  
and a few shiny pebbles.  
I stack them inside, right by the window,  
so she can see that I've kept every one.  
I wonder if she'd recognize me with a smile,  
she's never seen me like that.

Crows stay faithful to their partners  
until one of them dies. I only ever see her  
on her own. I wonder if she hasn't found  
her partner yet, or if she is mourning  
after a lover now lost.

Crows recognize voices too, so I sing to her  
when she visits. Sometimes I crack open  
a pomegranate and she pecks at the arils  
right in front of me. I wonder if she sees  
the stones behind my window; I wonder if  
she knows she's the reason I'm still here.

She always flies away, wings black as midnight,  
sails into the sky. I wonder what it is about  
people like me, who love spiders and crows,  
who let dandelions conquer the garden, who  
keep the one-eyed teddy bear, and sand the  
shattered glass.

I am a defender of all the other broken things,  
unwanted things, forgotten things,  
things the world finds monstrous, worthless,  
things that I find kindred. She deserves  
her hazelnuts, to hop from foot to foot, she  
deserves to exist.

And when she brings me another stone,  
gray with shimmering specs of silver,  
and sets it outside of my window,  
I think, maybe I deserve that too.



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