



The Crow

In Houston On South Boulevard
At the heron rookery in late spring.

CAW - CAW – CAW

The harsh cry bounces through the live oaks,
Followed quickly by the black form
Penetrating the canopy,
Searching for exposed eggs
To make the daily meal,
The night herons shuffling nervously
From one long leg to another,
Looking for the source of the disruption
Of rookery harmony.

Weirdly, I am reminded of the oil giants,
Hearing the caw-caw-caw of climate change
Pressure coming from the Pope and activists,
The “boys” looking back over their shoulders,
Wondering when they will need to
Do the right thing
And sequester the carbon
That they liberate and expel.

I know that the comparison's not quite right,
But the thought of it still makes me smile,
Imagine the largest of the big oil companies
Nervously peeking back over its shoulder
After hearing me yell into the wind
CAW – CAW – CAW.
And the crow flies by to tell me she's proud.

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On a cool and rainy day in Houston in 2017
After the fourth big flood in the last three years.

From the Southwest Freeway to the guts
Of downtown and all points in all directions,
We are soaked –
Sick and tired and worried
About the floods that are supposed to be
Only once every hundred or five hundred years,
Floods that are recurring at a frightening rate,
Floods that reveal the limits of our engineers,
And the failure of our politics and politicians,
Floods that leave us fearful of thunder,
Getting hives when the rumbles are felt,
Unsure of our safety, our homes and
Our ability to protect our children
When the rains come.

The big black bird flies straight at me,
Steely eyes focused on the human before him,
The harsh caw, caw, caw draped around it
Like a coat, creating persona, creating identity.

The wise old crow looks down at me,
Having seen the destruction from the flood,
Knowing that we have done this to ourselves
Knowing that our concrete caused more runoff,
Making the channels carved for the biggest storms
Too small to handle even the more frequent ones,

Knowing that carbon has changed our climate,
Creating bigger storms that come more often now,
Asking me as he passes over,
“Can your kind fix that which they have done”?

And then he says welcome to Earth Church,
Pull yourself up a pew,
Pray the storm finds you not
And the inches are few.
Amen.