

Lara Gularte

## Fisher Man at Eagle Lake, California

Up to his thighs,  
he pulls fish from the dark lake,  
brings them to the light to die,  
nothing slips away.  
Some he jerks out of the shallows,  
too small, so he throws them back.

Crazed for water,  
big fish from the deep  
wiggle and twist,  
gulp air through their gills.

He cuts off heads,  
splits them gullet to tail,  
yanks out the life strings,  
scrapes scales to skin.

Lemon, sliced down the center,  
washed over palms,  
between fingers, over wrists  
to hide the smell of death.

He tosses the innards into the water.  
What he leaves behind will meet the surface  
like a bubble of air.  
Like the jacket of the lost boy  
last seen across the lake crying.

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## Sandhill Cranes at Lundgren's Rice Farm

Long gray arcs break through  
wet branches of trees.

The slapping of wings  
take the afternoon by surprise.

Ancient spirits, they circle  
and glide in thin lines.

Only the wind can break them.

Old memories resurrected  
by their loud, trumpeting call,  
an antique grief of lost days.

Behind them wetlands grow vague.

Suddenly they slip  
beyond this world.