

MONICA RICO

**American Crow**

*Tecolorico michicanae*

I *Family*

If I say my father,  
a bird of prey,  
married my mother  
as decoration  
instead of stealing  
her like his father  
taught him,  
will my color  
make sense  
as North  
American,  
the back  
of a river  
sleek as a  
train track  
carrying the green  
headdress of Montezuma  
when I know it was never  
made from feathers—  
a relic of the Spanish  
like a last name  
which says we come  
from here by way of water.

II *Description*

My wings larger  
than my body  
brown against blue  
I fly when I want to  
twig in mouth I will  
build a nest again  
and the screech owl  
will laugh and laugh.  
He doesn't like my head—  
too much reflection—

→

or my mouth  
dripping with  
the gold wedding  
band I place above  
my head.  
The first bird  
to love me  
wrote his name  
on my knuckles.  
His mother watched  
and nodded her head  
as if I were already  
owned.

III *Range*

I hated New York  
because I could  
never see the moon.  
There were no stars  
just pigeons for me  
to chase on sidewalks  
their coo a reminder  
of Michigan and my  
family I would  
return to.

IV *Feeding Behavior*

I pack sardines in my over-  
night bag, crackers,  
tomato, and cucumber.  
The meal my grandfather  
passed down with  
his wide forehead.  
The delicate flip  
of an egg into the hand  
of a tortilla bloodied  
with hot sauce.

V *Nesting and Breeding*

I never wanted more  
than an apartment  
with wood floors  
and a Ford Escort.

VI *Songs and Calls*

My sound  
can be misleading—  
too familiar—  
silver and echo  
from my neck.  
I cannot find  
the map of iridescent  
hatch marks I leave  
spinning, searching,  
waiting for my mother  
to call me home.