Out of Line

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Out of Line

MINDY TAYLOR

I

On the bed, within the lines
defining the halfway mark,
he charted his space, was afraid
I might touch him. Imagine how that feels.
Afraid I might touch him.

The bird you've been reaching out the bread to,
saying again and again, "I won't hurt you,"
dances toward you, flutters back.
The damn bird won't take it.

Say if he did, if he lit on your arm,
your shoulder, imagine the feeling you'd have.
Inverted, it is repulsion.

It is wondering if your arms are too thick,
your shoulders too manly; it is wondering
how you can avoid being human,
knowing that all the hairs of his body rise at once,
not to a wind, but according to a shudder in his body,
as all the grasses would rise if the earth shuddered.

II

Imagine a woman in a room alone
with the earth on a string dangling
from her finger, no force to make it repel
yet it does; it flies away from her,
bouncing against the wall in a fight to get cut,
to fall in line, as it should, with things like it.

Maybe it wasn't me. Maybe it was that the earth,
out of order, was maligned: everything waited
for it while it threw its weight around
for a time in my room
when my love undressed me in the light.