MONICA RICO

American Crow

Tecolorico michicanae

I  Family

If I say my father,
a bird of prey,
made 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.