A Dove In Her Hair

Have you seen the birds fleeing from her eyes, a grey string that looped around the hills, threading through the shafts of light in olive trees that had mourned too long and too thoroughly. The last, tiniest bird died by my open door. I buried him in the shallow ground with three stones to honour his flight.

I have seen him again, a beautiful grown dove sitting in her black hair pecking the white threads out. She had a knife in her hand, slicing open the bellies of fish, then blessing each of their fins with three of her right-hand fingers, she threw them back into the water.

An old woman crouches at her feet, stirring in the crystals of salt clattering down her cheeks, her own boney finger getting longer, longer.

I offered the old woman a round stone to sit upon, hugging her black shoulders. She made room for me to sit beside her.

— lala heine-koehn