

VI

CASTING LOTS FOR THEM

βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ' αὐτά  
(Mark 15.24)

three herons in a field with no horizon  
I stop to look  
fret furls the fenceposts  
two fly off; the third  
just gazes

*o vos omnes  
qui transitis per viam  
attendite et videte  
si est dolor  
sicut dolor meus*

and I hold my breath while they roll  
a pair of sheep-bone dice for your  
dew-jewelled plumage, regal  
on a rise in the shorn field  
king of the harvest

they pluck you bare for all to taunt  
feathers cover the path like straw on a stable floor  
where those who win the toss whittle them to  
quills and write fine words without meaning  
for thus they inherit their portion

*sicut dolor meus  
si est dolor  
attendite et videte  
qui transitis per viam  
o vos omnes*

κλῆρος: a lot (cast or drawn)  
κληρονομία: inheritance