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Gay Baines

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Birds Redux

by Gay Baines

Over Union Road, a herring gull
tilts himself. Above him in
the blue-white sky, a
jetliner turns and banks.
The gull thinks *I can do
that too, but I do it
differently*. He banks and

turns, his companion does
the same. Crows near the bush
off Schwartz Road float
on a summer day, eyeing the
smooth water of a swimming pool,
where a woman floats, arms out,
feet dangling. *We do that,*

they crackle to each other,
*but we do it up here,
in the open, not in that wet stuff.*
The cat, well-fed, stalks a champagne-
wire, attacks and tortures it to death,
or thinks he does. I hesitate in the
supermarket, buying haddock, heart

in my mouth, gazing at the lobsters
tanked behind the counter. Some day,
I think, I'll set you all free.
Back home, the cat, games over,
looks down at me from his perch
on the mantelpiece, saying, but
not in so many words, *You fool.*



Photo (detail) by Joel Kendall

