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SUNDAY MORNING LETTER

by L.L. Ollivier

I'm writing to you, magpies,
because I hear you at the window
when I wake, desert mornings
scrabbling in your voices,
sunlight chiming around you
in the branches of the elm.

You wear the patchwork flags
of night and day; your hard eyes
gauge the dark and do not flinch.
I look to you, magpies, because I've come
to dread that dark, because I've fought sleep
nights on end, fearing I wouldn't wake.

I'm writing, magpies, because it's Sunday,
my fortieth birthday, day to break bread,
remember the dead, to free
myself from fear, as you have,
death your life, your sacrament.

I write, releasing these words to you
like fallen leaves on wind,
or feathers you've left shining
like a promise in the pasture grass.