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Paper Bird

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Paper Bird · *Robin Behn*

The way folding makes a weakness
In the paper, the way the weakness

Lets the wings
Move as if to fly,

The way, flying, he left me
And left behind this bird

As a token, I suppose, of how
We two

Were a bird with four wings
That seemed to lift

Our single body
A little off the ground;

So this bird
Must remember when it was a letter

He could not quite write.
In the small hour when real birds

Unfolded their cries
To test the air

For others of their kind,
Hour when always before

He'd be waking me, his tongue
Lassoing the hidden cry

Buried in the throat
Of our two-member species,

In that same hour he sat
At the old oak table

Where first light ignited
The oval rings of wood into a pond-

Mirage, and then from a height
The shadow of a parched bird

Dove and broke
Its body on the pond.

He saw, then, what to do.
How flight means resurrection.

And he wrote me,
By folding:

First, the patterned sheet
(As where I still lay, sleeping),

Its white underbelly
Too delicate to name;

Then a paper plane
(Each one-way passenger erased

By a snow of diamonds falling
From the ticket puncher's metal kiss);

Then the plane's body
Snapped to make a beak,

To make the beak point down at me
From his pillow as I woke. . . .

Bird, my name is robin.
All right. I'll un-evolve you.

Two blank sheets.
But what shall we become?