

Morning at the Marsh

It is a morning meant for mindful meandering
– the air is flavored with the remnants of
melted ice, however untimely for midwinter
January.

Boardwalk birdwatchers bounce around the
bog – a woman swallowed by an unsightly red
coat guides her lens towards ragged branches.

My shoes squelch the sludge with playful
stomp – there is nowhere to be, not even the
end of the path.

I pause, perching on the prostrate poplar –
then perceive a chirping red jewel framed
between branches across the bank.

It calls to mind: childhood mornings in the
crotchety kitchen chairs, crunching away on
cereal – dawdling for cardinals, our state bird.

Not only birds, but the backyard birch I beheld
with its baffling bark – on long drives I would
spot their bold skin, more brilliant than their
arboreal kin.

The delight of discerning species and dialects
of nature – the whimsy, the wonder of being
included in the great scheme of the world.

Here I am now: heftier, and perhaps a bit
haughtier – with the taste of Cheerios in my
mouth as I watch the familiar plumage

glimmer, nestled between two stark white gatekeepers.

I've convened again with the content companion of curiosity, and consider – what other unlearned creatures hide under the overgrown hair of the marsh?