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Darter

Rose van Son

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Darter by Rose van Son

1. Down-feathered
   wings out
   you greet me
   by the edge of this
   Big Wide River
   your neck strikes space
   between limestone and sky

2. A school of fish
   jack-knifes water’s surface
   plays games of fate
   neck turned
   you listen
   stories in the afternoon

3. The two of us
   paint fisherman
   silhouette colours his hat
   a shade darker

   You do not falter
   movement is rare
   stoop occasionally to bury secrets
   behind your head

   A caw distils
   serenity

   Afternoon shadows
   pass two-fold

4. Twins
   tip the balance
   disgust patterns your face

   Wake pleats shadows
   uncertainty spreads

   Still you stand your ground

5. Confidence
   smarts your face
try the water again
paddle sequence

Your neck the only reminder of your visit

Rose van Son is a WA writer and educator; she loves language and culture. Her poems and short stories have been published in several journals including Westerly and Indigo. In 2000 she won the Katharine Susannah Prichard Short Fiction Award.