

1st Place Poem

All the Vagrant Flock – by Emma McKervy

My sister thought once that a tropical bird
had escaped from the aviary in the zoo,
had chosen to rest on her back yard fence
and rang our mother to tell her so.
She described in detailed awe the shades
of the varied feathers, the shimmering of green
and purple and soft, soft grey until our mother
folded shut the bird book on her lap
and told her it was a pigeon: my mother,
who knew her greater crested from her lesser,
was flummoxed by this child she'd borne.
But sometimes now when I stand in the city's parks
without a mother now, but with a sister still
I rarely call, I scatter crumbs from my sandwich bag
to summon all the vagrant flock,
hoping that I too can rise in their midst
when I startle all with a single impulsive clap.

Emma McKervy