

## Scintillations

*for Judith Tucker*

It was the line they formed you wondered at:  
that angled miracle of straightness,  
a cool, coasting cluster moving over water.

Serene, so it seemed.  
They knew their places.  
They had a destination in mind.  
They flew in community.

Below them, the waves unfurled their diamonds.  
Free jewelry for those who watch closely enough to collect it.  
Scintillations.

You were one of those.  
You watched, and you saw, and your hands translated.  
Your eye picked out shape and grace and color:  
you caught no birds, but  
highlands and oceans, crags and coves,  
forested hills and earth's broken history,  
latterly marshes and night skies and the built shelters of humans.  
You found uncountable wordless meanings.  
You revealed the beauties in preservation.  
You caught—but only kindly, to release the creatures later,  
onto canvas.

The remaining paint hues will stay in their tubes now, unused.  
Your vision's over.  
Hands stilled.  
Last works propped up in the studio, unfinished, like those travelling  
fliers in the shallow waters, awaiting departure.

You loved the word, the sound of it, as well as that bird's dinosaur majesty,  
its comically noble beak holding a folded, hungry pouch.  
Its swift, sharp dive for fish.  
That sudden decisiveness.

*Pelican.*

When we watched them take off together,  
we realized  
their wide wings could carry them anywhere.