

ROOKERIES

All men knew a secret of the northern part
of an old world, a less perfect

idea. For the bicornuate woman,
it is an island. If there, the birds

lose our trust, we might learn

their language. After all, we have
been taught

to read and write,

to remove our hands

from other work

as we watch water twist into rock:

to cover our wounds,
staying alive light after light.

For something, I worry.

The moon pronounced with clarity

its known topography. Our letters
and lists, reconstructed grammars:

they replace the ways in which we were
grabbed, then pushed and shoved.

A fine wife and her children
set to rove with indefinite orders:

lineal migration on a small scale,
a purpose was not nautical,

but conflictual. Of those men,

we knew I could never do
them any good. In this way

I forget, and let the wind
(river). It gales and tears
at my shoulders and wrists.

—Joan Naviyuk Kane