

Little king of the salt marsh

Tordo alrojo,

thrush of the red wing, sidling
cattail flowerheads,
prance with me, grapple and peck
below the stalks, watch corn worms
wiggle their way toward fat kernels
sticky on my finger.

Gordo capitán,

do you enjoy the slender blades of marsh grass as I do,
the sweet juice that coats the tongue?
I wade beneath the grain,
filaments of color escape my grip.
I scratch, seeking sustenance
with my swamp brothers—*Sargentos al pantanoso*—
black satin plumage tightly pressed,
fire-red epaulets glistening.

Mayito de la ciénaga,

floating with damsel flies,
dance with me through the bulrushes,
double-step around the glasswort;
bathe with me in the wetland shallows,
dipping and splashing and fluttering.
Head turned, buried in fluffed feathers,
you roost, caressed by silky plumes of phragmites,
Mirlo, reyito de la marisma.