

SECOND NATURE, 2010

from "Second Nature"

Snow thickly falls through the trees on the knoll
as I watch her, motionless on a gnarled
branch of oak. Wings folded, patched white

as flake by flake she becomes a soft burl
of snow. Wind erases my footprints.
My mother's last breath—did I inhale it?

Indigenous, I begin. Presence, I pray—
stopped by the sharp swivel of a beaked gaze
that unlocks me, just long enough that my

eyes go yellow and wind ruffles the shawl
of feathers my neck now is—as the hawk
turns and lifts into the Undivided.

Now who is it bows to the empty branch?