

Dying Swan

It does not grow easier,
this shift to winged other,
this stepping of flesh to gradated feather —
alula

to scapular

to covert

to flight;

this flattening of breast, crushing of rib, pausing of breath
as womb is exchanged for cage of down, boned and tight-
sewn

to clot any blood that might trickle through quills, loosed
by a thousand flexions and elongations of neck,
arcings of spine, twistings of joints as limbs realign

to quiver

to droop

to shudder

to death

on boards become moonlit water.