

The Wash

*(Do not stray into areas where there may be quick sand
and dangerous tidal conditions)*

When the dream goes she takes herself
to where the braided river splits –
the only sound is the clink of oars
settling in their rests,
overhead an occasional plane
leaches the sky, too high to hear.

There's a stubbornness in this stretch
of water as if it holds the bank
in thumbscrews – tightens slowly
each day with cracked forefinger
and thumb to get its own way.

She leaves the boat, half-woman-
half-heron, paddles through the slick
of something left by someone else,
it's soft like loss, cradles her feet.
Walking on land is not like this.

While others sleep she keeps afloat,
sneaks through marshland, feet
skidding on silt, upper body doubting
sabotage from mud. If the moon was bright
she'd imprint her shadow on water.
It's forgotten her tonight, like every night.