

VICKI GOODFELLOW DUKE

The Call

At Sea Wolf Island,
glass rain,
clear beads click
a silk patter
on the canopy of leaves,
flesh of birch
bleached raw from wet.

Streamlined bodies
graceful,
a family of loons,
young riding high,
flaunt tartan of red eye
and black-checked crest.

Cloistered birds,
they know to stay
in this keep behind a screen
of rain, thin filter
for their hollow-throated moan,
the sound of longing itself.

It is the sudden thrash,
wild skip across the surface, a flutter
of legs propelled into air,
that haunt us later.

We too seek sanctuary,
and run, clan-starved,
Hansel and Gretel,

to a place that might be home,
falsetto wails trailing
our feathers.