

Cormorants

Peggy McCarthy

They hover above water –
their wingtips skim circuits like blades
over ice – then plunge beak first,
spear through weighted ocean
like underwater missiles,

rise and swoop in from choppy seas,
flock to the rocks, spread their wings
like celebrants on an altar,
throw themselves open –
purge their drenched souls,

spin through arcs
of instinct and ritual,
plough through sea and air,
wrestle rites of gravity –
skirt the loops and troughs

of my dizzy heart.