

Compendium on Crows

Lorna Crozier

Brains so sharp they know everything at once
and don't sort it into parts, their caw, caw, caw
parsed only by the dead in the stench of the gut.

Two crows or one: sorrow and joy have nothing
to do with them. Meat does, and the eyes of lambs,
and rotting matter. In the high boughs of the spruce

they tuck their feet beneath their robes and take confession.
Go on—it's you who gives them that, their black
madonnas, their worry beads of bones.

They have no gods of punishment or absolution.
They have no stations. Yet, without exception,
they dote on their young, give them what they lack,
pluck the songbird's newly hatched like living plums.

Compendium - a collection of concise but detailed information about a particular subject, especially in a book or other publication.

Madonnas - pictures, statues, or medallions of the Virgin Mary (Catholic), typically depicted seated and holding the infant Jesus.

Worry beads - a string of beads manipulated with one or two hands and used to pass time in Greek and Cypriot culture, similar to prayer or Rosary beads