

THE THREE BIRDS OF THE MILKY WAY

Donika Kelly

Here: the queen on her throne,
the Summer Triangle,
the wingtips of the great swan

charted in the sky. On the cusp
of winter, under the pollution
of a hunter's moon, I see,

for once, no bird, but a cross;
no wing but a brace
to bear what must be borne.

The guide says there are three
great birds of the Milky Way,
the Pathway of the Birds.

How did I end up here?
What wind blew me off course,
took me from heart and home?

My body falters, loses
feather and beak and bone,
turns to dust or ice or stone.