On the Color of Feathers

Sasha Tobin

When a rabbit is dead in the road
When the garbage bag is split open
the can tipped over
When scavenging birds gather
to peck at maggots and muscles

Will you truly notice the difference between a raven and crow?
Will you believe one is more sophisticated
because of its size?
the sleek shine of its bill?
Do you riddle one with a writing desk,
expect the other to bring ill tidings to the sun?

Do you measure a bird by the capacity of its wingspan? The length of its life?

Will you wrap a bird's life in death
based on the color of its feathers?
The dissonance of its song?

I have spent many years believing
a raven is more sophisticated
that the shiny objects they collected held meaning.
That such birds carried the memory and wisdom
of one-eyed gods in a pair.

But who am I
to define a bird by its wingspan?
Short and scraggly,
who am I to know
if I will have eight years or thirty?
In the end,
we'll all sing
a croaking, cawing sound of death.

In the end,
feathers of any color
will not fly me home.

Sasha Tobin is a poet, educator, and museum director. She currently resides in Keene, New Hampshire. She is currently involved with Slam Free of Die in Manchester and Untitled Open Mic in Lowell poetry communities. She was a member of the 2025 Slam Free or Die Slam Poetry Team, and the SFOD Blackberry Peach representative of 2026. She released her first self published work, Spiritual Catstache, in 2025. When she is not working on poetry, you can find Sasha reading banned books with children, drinking too much coffee, or whimsy-ing down a sidewalk like she's in a musical.