



MAGPIES RECOGNIZE THEMSELVES IN THE MIRROR¹

— KELLI RUSSELL AGODON

The night sounds like a murder
of magpies and we're replacing our cabinet knobs
because we can't change the world, but we can
change our hardware. America breaks my heart
some days, and some days it breaks itself in two.
I watched a woman have a breakdown in the mall
today and when the security guard tried to help her
what I could see was all of us
peeking from her purse as she threw it
across the floor into Forever 21. And yes,
the walls felt like another way to hold us in
and when she finally stopped crying,
I heard her say to the fluorescent lighting, Some days
the sky is too bright. And like that we were her
flock in our black coats and white sweaters,
some of us reaching our wings to her
and some of us flying away.

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Kelli Russell Agodon's most recent book was a finalist in the Washington State Book Award and shortlisted for the Julie Suk Poetry Prize for books by independent presses. She is the cofounder of Two Sylvias Press where she works as an editor and book cover designer. Her next collection of poems will be published in 2021 by Copper Canyon Press.