

## It Begins and Ends Here

My pillow rocks and bangs  
through another wash cycle.  
Millions of feathers breaking down  
from the weight of water.  
When the pillow's finally flat,  
I will love it even more  
for its dust of crushed shafts and barbs.

Feathers like these warmed geese  
that flew over lakes named Rice or Star.  
After their frost-clear barking faded,  
I'd find down drizzled in fields, roadsides.  
Good pickings, I thought, for a mouse's den.

Or that oriole nest I found  
fashioned from feathers, birch bark  
and dental floss. Tacked to cattails,  
it sags with its egg weight.

As a girl, I left my crude watercolor  
of geese and cattails in the rain.  
Days later I found it under the lilac,  
warped, mottled and more beautiful.  
*Look, mother. I made it with God's help!*

Today, I pull off the road  
and turn the radio up.  
Some story about bank thieves,  
thousands stolen. In the chase,  
a bag blew out a window. The wind scuttled  
fives and ones into woods and water.  
Fishermen found them weeks later  
woven into a beaver's dam. All bills  
whole and spendable.

