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TWO WINGS

Jalon Young

jalonyoung80@gmail.com

The following poem is one of mothers and sons, of grief, of loneliness.

Jalon Young is a Mississippi native currently studying English at Tulane University. His goal is to produce work, be it academic or creative, that touches and holds.

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Two Wings

*after Nicole Sealey, for Ma
Jalon Young*

It is written somewhere
that the population of Canadian geese nearly zeroed
in the nineties. So when I pass the lake
in front of the house with the wraparound porch,
the lake where the Canadian geese congregate
and peck at the Mississippi soil,
I know I am admiring testimonies.

"Oh to be a goose," my mother says.

"Don't have a care in the world," which means
her world is nothing but cares.

For 21 years I held the hand of a woman
whose tongue spoke the language of giving
but can now only muster phrases of emptiness,
phrases of being stripped down and thinned.

Oh to be a goose

*which could mean, Oh to be able to take flight
even if the body only reaches a few inches
above the ground for just a few seconds.*

You see, my mother wishes
for a house with a wraparound porch
like the one fronted
by a lake where the Canadian geese congregate.

And when she gets it

I hope she gets a lake with geese
and see the geese take their few seconds of flight
and learn that death desired her body
but the wings
she believed herself to be unpossessed of
carried her over.

Mama, measure the breadth of your arms
and see that you have many more lands to cover.

