

Flowing, Flown

by kate hill cantrill

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In the field stands a jealous man with fifteen eyes stored inside the cuffs of well-worn khaki pants. His pockets pull with clinking dimes and when his hand jams in the silver-dipped copper disks clank and gather. Ten cents per, he says, and *pop!* he buys another eye, and *slide*, he lines it in the folds, for no one looks for gems on ankles, gems tucked in a rolled-up sleeve. He likes the way they pulse and blink and try to hear by straining wide. He'd like to buy up every one; he'd like to fill the air between his thumb and finger; finger, ring; ring and pinky; he'd like to walk with outstretched hands to see how things appear from there.

He spies a little side-eyed bird and tries to buy his two for one; but no, this bird won't sell: I have no use for dimes, he says. But, *clink*, the man jams in his hand. Two dimes for one—the bird says no. Four dimes for one—the bird says no. Ten dimes for one—the bird says no; and when he bends his wings for flight the man throws all those copper disks, but *soft* they slide inside the layered feathers on those wings. The man grabs in his fist the eyes that blink and strain inside those khaki folds. *Swoosh, zip!* But *soft*, they roll upon those wings; they roll off onto air and flutter there, tears welling up because of wind. The man says, Nice to know how things appear. He's jealous of their height, their lonely sense of wonder what, and where to go from here.

