



ON A LONE RETREAT AFTER I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE GOING CRAZY

BY JULIENE MUNTS

See the red-winged black bird land on a cattail among the marshes
and beyond him, the graceful landing of a grey heron testing the
pond water. Watch the black-tufted blue jay swoop from branch to

branch to get a better look at the human eating cottage cheese and
pineapple. Hear the approaching rain shush upon the grass as
sparrows titter about their day without fear. Hold still as the heron

steps carefully in knee-deep water then angles away, long-winged,
to another pond. Admire the rain--a visible lace curtain against a
backdrop of evergreen pine, fir and cedar on contrasting slopes.

Observe the curtain advance noisily, forming a thousand rings
Appearing and disappearing in the marshes, in the steaming tea.
Stay while raucous sleet pelts new-budded tree branches, gravel,



Shipwrights

The Review of De-Centered English

and the dark rain jacket. Dance to the popcorn sleet in the green grass.
Wave to the mountain slope turned grey shadow. Invite sun rays
through the curtain covering a window of blue sky on the edge of daunting
clouds. Turn away from seventy-five mile-per-hour sound dopplering
against opposite hills while birds go on singing as if surrounded
by a lulling storm. Learn from the chipper birds. Climb the hill back
to the cabin. Sit on a swing under an awning and sing, too, fingers tapping
the keyboard. Let robins hop around to the rhythm of the slowing sleet.
Take this away from the heron, the red-winged blackbirds swaying in the reeds:

Stand still. Blend with the surroundings. Stay a long while. Watch
slowly so no one knows you're there. Sing a little. When you've had
enough, fly home. You've found what you were looking for.

***JULIENE MUNTS** writes from her homes in Idaho, U.S.A. and Skåne, Sweden. Published in Avocet, Beauty for Ashes Poetry Review, and a book of poetry How They Die, she holds a B.A. in English Literature/Creative Writing. She has been a bed and breakfast manager, substitute teacher at a charter school, and is mother to three children. You can order a PDF or bound version of her book at Lulu.com.*