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Storying Ecocenes



Ask

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Ask

by Sheri Reda



About the Author

Sheri Reda is a writer, educator, and performer whose stories and poems have most recently appeared in *Dear Human at the Edge of Time* (Paloma Press, 2023), *Ecocene Journal* (2023), *The Healer's Burden* (University of Iowa Press, 2022), and *Examined Life Journal* (2021). She has recently presented stories at *Fillet of Solo* (2015-2022), *Story Sessions* (2014-2023), *Is this a Thing* (2018-2025) and other juried shows. Sheri is the founder and director of Flow and moment, LLC, through which she offers public speaking, facilitation, and ceremonies. She also offers programming at Wilmette Public Library and the C. G. Jung Center.

Ask

Sheri Reda

Instead of God, who is probably there, but
cast your eye on the shoreline at Lake Calumet
and a black-crowned night heron striding across a muddy inlet
where chromium, copper, zinc, cadmium, and lead—
elements of God's mineral wealth—no longer congregate
in numbers too great to be good.
Witness its solitary elegance stalking snakes
in shallow waters restored to life
and deaths more wholesome than poisoning:
demise by gulls and avian rivals
and mammals who aren't us this time
and nest failure (who among us hasn't shuddered to think
of mistakes we've survived that others have not?)
and at last, old age. Ask all the chirruping industry *why*,
its reply no more brutal than God's stubborn silence
and pretty, at least, under the deepening sky.