

THINGS THE CROW KNOWS

by Pamela Sumners

The crow knows all the old sayings
from all the ancient arguments,
knows "as the crow flies" is just
a mismeasurement of *is*

God knows the crow watches
fallen calves outside the fences
chased away for cleft palates
or they just ran off too curious
about the dirt-feel of the logging road
and God know the crow's prayer-
circle the cows when the calves
come home limp over fieldhand's arms
and all the cows gather to mourn
in low and indecipherable tones.

The crows square off against the man
at the fence, mocking his property sign,
making him fear to enter what he posted
to keep out. The shiny-eyed crows
keep vigil, impervious of warnings
against trespass, sentinel themselves
until the cow eulogies are spent.

The crow knows that God knows
they are innocent of murder and man
reviles his kind without cause. The crow knows
God gave him, as an apology for winter,
atonement for our superstition, the sweet
mysterious ability to fly straightaway
heavenward, home.