

The Crow's Meal

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I find terrapin 3113 belly-up but no belly,
dead within the day, shell broken,
ants in the eyes, radio tag still signalling.

Who am I to grieve a crow's meal,
yet here I am, a singular question--
Was it my fault?

Same day: all the other hatchlings,
all my other teachers,
still in their same locations--

whether they are alive or dead
made secret
by three centimeters of sand.

As scientist and student, I know
so little. Animal ethics and evolution alike
play the long game.

You, who wintered at the meadow's edge,
who alone bearing the radio,
allowed me to meet you again in spring,

was your doom prescribed
at our first meeting, our second, or
in a glint of sun as a crow flew by?