

Heron

By **Antoinette Voûte Roeder**

We see him first
 from a distance
 blending with rock and sea.
 With every turn in the path
 he appears again, drawing
 our gaze. We simply have
 to stop.

It's not that he
 befriends us; no,
 but we can't keep
 our eyes off him.
 Tall and solitary,
 immensely contemplative,
 he slowly stalks the shallow water,
 bending a slim and elegant leg,
 lifting a foot clad in seaweed
 to which he pays no attention at all.

His garment is grey,
 a tasseled prayer shawl
 whose fringes fly out
 with every breeze.
 A thin black pony tail
 trails down his back,
 his buffy-peach bill
 the sole spot of color
 in his monochromatic dress.

He crooks one leg on take-off
 and in a single powerful stroke
 becomes heavily airborne,

Antoinette Voûte Roeder is the author of five volumes of poetry, most recently *The Space Between*, available on Amazon. She has a Master of Music degree and has been offering the ministry of spiritual accompaniment since 1991. She recently started a meditation circle in which people sit with her, though they stay in their own homes, for thirty minutes a day, a program to create an oasis of calm and quiet in a world beset by the noise of hatred and lies. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.



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great wings spread
and waving.

Our mystical guide,
it occurs to me
might just be Thomas Merton in
disguise, the short and sturdy
monk come back
as a thin, aristocratic bird.

Wouldn't it be just like him?