



Michael Salcman

The Ruined City Rises

Outside the dead zones life
turns frantic:
narrow strips of perch and
rockfish
churn the water's surface,
black cormorants dip their necks
to drink,
and out on the edges
long-legged waders tremble in
the marsh,
a lonesome crab skims to
daylight.

Outside the dead zones
a wall of wavering heat
makes me mistake tin-colored
fins
and flashing bodies
for zephyrs licking the waves.
I point my breathless sails
toward these imaginary puffs,
their silver threads stitching
the water.

Soon enough a colony of gulls
descends,
their sharp eyes hooked by the
tireless weaving,
and a ruined city rises on their
wings,
its columns rooted in mud and
invisible grasses,
its capitals engraved with
shells.

Michael Salcman is a physician,
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