

## Chimera

ANN TWEEDY

Stryge flew when the cathedral lit up  
electrical system flashing red at some unknown juncture  
five thousand miles later, she landed on my shoulder

All the days since, cancer's voraciousness.  
Two feline littermates taken at 15—one beloved, the other  
a difficult genius. Friends stricken, my father killed, my uncle  
ailing. I know Stryge is to blame. Anger. Terror.  
Who's next? I don't want to know. I do want to know.  
I try to stem the tide. Not this one. Not that one. Not me.  
Please, I beg. Please, please, please. Leave the last cat for us,  
let him go some other way. Take a break, go to bed.  
Rip Van Winkle finally caught up on his sleep.

Stryge sits on my shoulder, looks out  
at my loved ones, my acquaintances—an attitude of remove.  
Her wings folded, her cheeks held up by delicate hands.  
I hope one day to stop crying—find peace in the  
onslaught. Stryge watches my surroundings, head one head-length  
above mine. She is heavy and light like all the other-worldly.  
My shoulder droops, then rights itself.