

II. **Giant Moa**

Gone.
The behemoth of New Zealand.
Twelve feet tall, five hundred pounds,
with featherless leg/trunks.
Maori drove these reddish freaks
into pits to kill, rob their nests.
Just three centuries before Europeans landed,
just that tiny window before 1500
when the boats began to land.
What a scare those creatures
would have given the sailors,
what a useful beast
that Moa might have been.

III. **Heath Hen**

The last one was seen, recorded
1932, West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard,
Massachusetts. She scuttled under a low bush
and became the last.
She had a witness but not a name.
Perhaps we could put a pin in a map,
have a toast with warm and comforting
tea, maybe with a bit of spice,
and name her, honor her, for feeding
the indentured laborers, the settlers,
no doubt the Wampanoag, the French
and the English, whoever arrived.

IV. **Passenger Pigeon**

The numbers would amaze.
Billions. Why passenger? Who did they carry,
or what were they carried on? The currents,
their plans. Gregarious, they are said,
as though they had a bird personality for
parties and friendship.
Pike County, Ohio, March 24, 1900,
the last one was captured, and zoo-ed
and named Martha,
after the wife of the father of our country.
A mourning dove, but different.
Those blasts of migration must have been
spectacular. Like Blue Angels that covered miles
of above, speeding overhead, darkness and light
simultaneously. They overdid it, those pigeons,
and so did we. How could we have known
the acres and acres of nests and broken branches
and bird talk heard for miles would not suffice?
How could such surplus erase?

V.

- Thick Billed Ground Dove
- Paradise Parrot
- Reunion Owl
- Alotra Grebe, 2010
- South Island Snipe
- Antillean Cave-rail
- File Builder Megapode
- Mauritius Night Heron
- Reunion Night Heron
- Rodriguez Night Heron
- Ascension Night Heron



This poem, written in 2010,
was published in *Canary*
in 2015 in a slightly different form.

I.
They were the imagination
of our planet. Let us have a bird
that lives here and spirals so,
and migrates in a sky-blanketing
single movement from Quebec to Texas.
Are wrens and robins
better than the Dodo?
Three wishes, which would you choose?

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