

THE LOON WAILS THIS MORNING

Cate McGowan

about mysteries, clarion songs,
a world bedecked until it bevels

away from me through the lake.
She drifts, bobs, and demands.

Under her hull, below the water,
she furiously paddles in cut
time, wrinkling the velvet surface.
Yet I only see her boat gliding

forth. I can't observe her webbed
feet working; I can't see anything

inside myself. Everything seals
shut like a ship's cabinet—airtight,

yet a jumble full of potions
and pots. An admixture of organs

in fancy wrappings, veined skin
or iridescent feathers. Today,

my loon accepts neither silence
or uncertainty. Her hoots go

searching. Her calls tremolo
and waver across the fog. I imagine

they reach a cove where a copse
of sweetgums hugs a still-dark bank,

where a male loon waits to yodel his
reply from the shallows. Like that inlet

in the distance, whose interiors
I'll never see, whose signals

I'll never fathom.