

Rewilding Our Streets

There came a time
when they knew they
could return.

We had left an
emptiness that nature
needed to fill.

African penguins,
emissaries of hope,
began to waddle the
streets of Simonstown.

We had receded
from spaces named
as ours alone.

Ducks returned to the
vacant fountains of Rome.

Delicate Sika deer,
known by locals as
'messengers of the Gods',
began to skitter again in
Nara's* bare streets.

Waters we'd owned
with our ships, emptied.

Mighty Orca thrust
deeper than ever -
up Indian Arm Fjord,
near Vancouver.

Mud we'd churned
with our Vaporetto's
in Venice, settled -

allowing cormorants to
miraculously return and dive
for shimmering, silver fish.

Creatures showed parts
of themselves they'd hidden.

Pigeons in London began
to wear plumages of
colours we'd never seen.

Jaguars and Pumas
explored empty streets of
Buenos Aires like
cheeky cubs.

Will we also allow our own
disregarded, forgotten and
homeless to reclaim their
space and dignity too?

**City in Japan.*

Craig O'Flaherty 2020