

Eleni Sikelianos

from *How to Construct the Animal Globe*

Bluebuck

its blue

hue

beckoned

which side

of blue

it had to drink daily

which made it easy (to shoot)

eating the best

red grass, spear grass, love grass

blue from dark skin showing thru

If you travel to Uppsalla, Capetown or London you might glimpse one

of the three remaining pairs of horns

A skull in Glasgow, one in Amsterdam

The four mounted specimens (Vienna, Stockholm, Paris, Leiden)

show no sheen of blue

Cape Serval (subspecies, extinct 20th century)

The cat of spare parts¹

leaps five feet into the air and can change directions there, snatch a bird

(which, if fowl, it will pluck before eating), hear a mouse

underground, hunt

without seeing its prey

Pounces — 40% effective by day

59% in the night

¹ Long legs, enormous ears, long neck, small head, back legs longer than the front

Aldabra Brush Warbler (confirmed extinct 1986)

“discovered” in 1967

described in 1968²

lost in 1969

found in 1975³

gone in 1983⁴

² based on one nest with a mated pair and three eggs

³ 6 individuals, all males

⁴ last known male expired

Cryptozoology

Poetry runs on gossip, why can't animals?²¹ Phantom

cats (black

panthers and pumas way out of their range)

Honshu and Hokkaido wolves heard howling — breathing — stepping on leaves —

I once saw a white detonation from a telephone wire along the highway near High Falls, NY
— a *symbolon* bursting in the eye —

It was a large raptor, not a speck of rufus/grey seemed to fleck it

Found something close in a bird book — a Gyrfalcon, Old Norse

in name, circling far from its range (the light-colored Gyrfalcon are found in Greenland, aiding
crypsis)

(= ability to self-conceal: nocturnality, transparency, camouflage and mimicry)

cryptid

(= how deep do you hide?)

A Gyrfalcon

Lays a golden egg

Wing chord, tarsal, tail and culmen working together for

Swan-hunting in China

A man with a gyrfalcon on his fist

Is rich

A woman

With a Gyrfalcon on her mind is

Changing the yaw-angle mid flight

Baiji (*Lipotes vexillifer*) (First described in the *Erya*, 3BCE, last possible sighting 2007)

Goddess of the Yangtze

Left-behind flag bearer

A princess thrown to the river by her father for

following

her own counsel

The first Laowai who saw one shot it, shipped it

to the Smithsonian

“You approach your refined language” and then you

move away

*

Searched the river, no animal came

Made shelter in a river-bend

no animal came

Japanese River Otter (declared ex. 2012)

it ate

eels

beetles

crab, shrimp,

fish,

watermelon

and

sweet potatoes

Entheogen (chorus)

It's the ghost dance of all the animals

beating earth

w/ their hooves

it's the black crow dance of reality

P U R G E

the who-me bubble

out front

golden popping who-me bubble

Reality keeps throwing up

her circus tents

plays a little

song on the

harmonica

to accompany herself out

swish swish

Reality's really

dirty

even its roosters
are making me
laugh

Everybody's hoarding
Everybody's barfing up
the world's extra energy

Throwing up reality

So the animal's ghost dance is
what we get

They will never be done Never be
done dancing If we wipe them
from the face of the earth
they will never be done being
part of it making the world with their
sounds & feet & hooves

until they are done dancing the
animals' ghost dance &
then they will be done

Eleni Sikelianos is the author of six books of poetry, most recently *The Loving Detail of the Living and the Dead* and *The California Poem*, which was a Barnes & Noble Best of the Year, as well as hybrid memoirs, *The Book of Jon* and *You Animal Machine (The Golden Greek)*. Sikelianos teaches in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Denver and Naropa's Summer Writing Program. A California native, longtime New Yorker, and world traveler, she now lives in Boulder with her husband, the novelist Laird Hunt, and their daughter, Eva Grace.