

NINE HERBS CHARM

Caroline Goodwin

i.

the wrinkled glass

(you swept it empty

cleaned it out

cleaned my heart

out and far away the flight

of the bare-throated tiger-heron

neck bent back

ii.

fury, song, *heavy storm*

floods communities

in western alaska —

through the green

fuse, down the yukon —

sing the charm three times

over the mouth, over

both ears

iii.

Heron 1 is an MALE (medium altitude long endurance) UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) built for the respective theatre of operation. 2013: German Herons log 15,000 Combat Operation Hours in Afghanistan.

iv.

heron: code for heroin

v.

river, the white stones
charm, the stone bowl
blood, my black heart
bridge, your mint sprig
leaf, the crushed dust

vi.

hybrid children
watch the
sea

vii.

against a sudden/violent
stabbing pain... shot
by witches, elves and other
spirits that fly through the air...
acquire the feverfew, red
nettle and plantain... boil
in butter... block the ears (loud,
oh! were they loud/when
they rode over the hill...

viii.

Heron 1 can carry an array of sensors, including infrared and visible-light surveillance, intelligence systems (COMINT and ELINT) and various radar systems, totaling up to 250 kg (550 lb). Heron is also capable of target acquisition and artillery adjustment.

ix.

the wrinkled glass

the ice-white waves

the thing that should

not be, history, apart-hood

your kettle and flame,

my ivory tusk (open the letter:

hurricane, floodgate, levee, imagine

our feet at the hearth

now that the war is through with me

Note: The *Nine Herbs Charm* is an Old English charm recorded in the 10th century, part of the *Lacnunga* manuscript, the oldest written Anglo-Saxon medical text. This poem incorporates a few verses from the actual charm, along with lyrics from the Metallica song "The Thing That Should Not Be" and information from Wikipedia about the German Heron warplanes.