At the New York State Museum

I obsess about the wired flight of stuffed starlings, how despite their nature, they do not snap at the songbirds in this mobile, nor call – car sirens and snags of dialogue in the throat. Their freckled chest heaveless and the hard marbles of their eyes black as punctuation.

Does every state have birds strung to a ceiling? In my hometown, these same histories – the colonial specter in the statehouse lit up behind glass, the limed dome before its new pennyness. At our state museum, a barricade of palmettos, cannonballs like wet footprints, dioramas of wrens and red hawks straining to break their bent tethers, high windows sealed to their escape.