Statio

by Kathleen O'Toole in the December 2, 2008 issue

For once, silence—
genuine calm. Forty minutes
on a tidal bight with a great blue
heron in the binoculars'
sight.
Not frozen
but still.
In a half hour, she barely turns
a full 360 degrees.
Time to notice
the dark wingtip markings,
light not-blue-but-gray breast feathers,
the cobalt dash between the long beak
and dark-eyed crown.
Expectation
gives way to awe, as each degree
thins her to a reed among reeds.

By sunset, barely an apostrophe
against the green marsh
what's left of color
bleeding into water,
this resolve:
to pause
to practice, to attend.

Statio. One of the elements of Benedictine spiritual discipline, the practice of pausing between activities to become conscious of the moment, of the presence of God.