

Woodpecker

Slit nostrils sense
what lies beneath.
This is what you live for—
sick wood giving way
beetle's squirm
on long sticky tongue
the swallowing.
You leave behind tunnels
paradise for squirrels
nests for smaller birds.
How many holes
can a tree endure?
You recall your beloved
White Pine.
Her curved trunk at road's bend
her thick sap weeping—
every time you came a calling.

Crow Raven

If you don't know
the differences
between Crow and Raven
what good are you to me?
I find the secret of being
in nature's details.
To you, they are a waste of time.
Crow marries for love
Raven for money.
Crow gives any dying creature
water from her beak.
Raven pecks fading eyes out.

And if you had ever lain in forests
against tree trunks
felt bark press hard towards
your back's thick skin
Crow would have watched
you with pity
Raven with menace.
Then, as Raven shat on you in disgust
Crow would have offered you strength—
hair and bone
life and breath
fear and death
twig and stone—
of smaller creatures.

And you would have recognized
that sweet saltiness in your mouth
my love.
For it is what you have been
feeding on for years.

Sitting Duck

All the others
sensed danger.
The dogs weren't
even quiet
for God's sake
and little Billy
shot off
his gun for fun
miles away.

All the others
knew to fly.
You were
mid-paddle
when shots
tore open
preened down.
Your last
dying wonder:

why red rainbows smothered you
as others touched blue of sky.

Humming Bird

I loved you when I was young
watched you sip sugar water
hover over my bright shirt.
There is no more sugar water now
or bright shirt
and I have aged terribly.
Poor trade for the genuine
is what I get.
Greta running nine miles
snorting nine lines
climaxing nine times
faster faster faster.
Greta starving
binging and barfing
chewing pills
thinner thinner thinner.
Greta drinking dancing
trying to sing.
No magic—
between monotony
and mayhem.

Summer Robin

How they search for her when the trees sigh for outer green.
How they smile for her when the stalks strain for sunny sheen.
How they supplicate for her when rains signal for spring clean.

Wonder, adoration, delight, give way to
pulling *another* worm—isn't she fat enough
singing the same *old* song—hasn't she said enough?

Springtime is so obviously over, my dear.
Really. A summer robin should have the good taste
to *know* when she ought to fly away.

Why, just last night I spotted one that caught my eye.
I almost lost my head until I saw her gray feathers
and wrinkles and wanting in the August sun.