

Orison

A morning washed to gleamy skin and bone, to the vapoury
 radiance left by
 Rain, to such absolutes as my own shadow burnt on treebark
 and hedgeleaf and
 Living its other life there while I walk this present, provisional
 body towards
 The vanishing point, peering backwards to see a small fleet of
 ducks muckraking
 On the grass verge—for earthworms, I guess, whose thirst has
 brought them out

To savour the aftermath of last night's downpour, blind blood-
 coloured bodies
 Sliding through raptures of damp, through such palpable slow
 ecstasies of drip
 And slobber, the smells of freshened earth their paradise as the
 ducks peck and
 Swallow the morning's manna—a gift they give thanks for in an
 anthem of quacks
 As they waddle a swamp of sunlight, totally for the moment and
 at home in it.

Distraction

I'm trying to get a line of Leopardi right when a flock of starlings
startles—
Mobbing a marsh hawk, staying up-sky of him, folding round
him their net
Of black silk till he shrugs them off on a downdraft, the whole
flock closing
Like a broken concertina in leaves where they become invisible,
only throats
Crowding the air with clamour. Meanwhile the hawk is
elsewhere—hawkbrain

Beating to another music: in the great blue hush of space, he
pays attention to
The air itself—its live feathertongued lightrush bearing him up,
his droll wingbeats
Opening and closing it like breath. Invisible loonybells, the star-
lings go on
Chattering their janglelife in branches, telling me how my own
head won't
Let go its appetite, is an old knife on stone: bitten blade, band-
aged handle.

Text, Illuminated

Upended like that under a canopy of leaves turned amber,
ochre, gold vermilion,
The belly of the dead deer by the roadside is moonwhite. And
the dead racoon
Curls up it seems in sleep—paws to closed face, waiting for the
crows into whose guts
It will go eyes first, so not to behold its own undoing. If you
gazed from a great height
What an enormous gorgeous scar you'd see—this whole north-
east a slow, south-moving

What Was in the Wind This Morning

Whisper of wind in the grass, among leaves of the ash: *Settle down,*
It says, *there's lots more where this came from.* So can it be we're just
A clinker of dust, a swirl-whirling rock-dervish, a series of lucky
breaks

Or unlucky happenstances? Somewhere in the unimaginable
meadow
Of spacetime, out there in the stoneblind airless dark, a herd of
miles-wide
Skyhigh rocks gallop like circus horses round and round and round

In crazy circles—their manes of fire, their eyes gouged out at
birth. No one
Cracks the whip, though gravity keeps them in decent line till
one of them
Salmon-senses the real absence and makes a run for it and leaves
the rest

To our imagining: the coming shadow of the odd chance of it, it
happening.