

For His Colleagues

The drenching garlic but nowhere the plant,
 the lapwing crippled far from her nest,
 and you, dear colleagues, are bodies without minds.

Four or five exempt, the rest—may my right hand
 lose its cunning if I can't make you jump.
 There's something pleasing in an empty room:

call it potential. This room gluttoned with you
 reeks and not merely of sweat. There's Fulvia,
 soft on the eye and the intellect too,

preening and pawning her way to wisdom;
 Lucius, his masturbatory fidget
 keeping us all awake; Spurius, skull-voiced,

requiring mirth of those he has wasted;
 and slouched in the corner the worst, snide
 and fitting right in, back where he belongs.

Court of Owls

Rod tells me pastorals are out this season.
It seems I must suspend my hard, or
weep my sorrow to the listless trees

and pray for relevance hereafter.
But how to silence the ratcheting tawny
who claims the hunter's moon?

Long ago I'd see the moonlight
gathered and enfolded
in tomorrow's benison of snowdrops.

And long ago I heard the owl
and saw him cross the moon, while my parents
quietly argued in another room.

A distant tawny soothes her reply.
Outside my window
the ghost of a barn owl ghosts by.