

R O B E R T   M I N H I N N I C K

*The Cormorant*

Don't think I don't know  
who you are.

Not even the soul  
takes such a trajectory,  
not even the cruise missile  
on its flyby of El Rashid Street  
flies so flat, homing in  
under the sea's radar,  
and what are you anyway  
but a deathstar flicked by a  
warrior-saint, a penny pitched  
at the busker's guitar-case,  
its blue silks opened  
like a street autopsy?

So don't think I'm afraid to say  
you bring the dusk with you  
and all the limestone twilights  
between Gwter Cyn y Locs and Gwter y Cwn,  
dragging the west behind you  
on fairground wings.

Because there's nothing else  
that sounds like you and there's nothing else  
that looks like you  
and there's never been anything  
that waits like you,  
more patient than oil  
in the departure lounges  
under the sea-bed.

You're midnight's glove-puppet,  
sentinel at the cavemouth,  
something plumed and glassy-eyed  
about you from the broom cupboard  
of Porthcawl museum,  
yet there you perch, on the capstan  
by the quayside bodega  
speaking the Arabic  
of the corsairs, ventriloquist  
of every cry that waits behind the dark.

Salt-water cockerel,  
your oiled carcass floats  
by the jetty. Is there no-one who  
will sweep away your blood's  
black videotape?

But here you come again,  
stealth-bomber out of the empty  
quarter, trailing your own death  
across the sky, in your heart  
the ashes of American astronauts,  
your forgiveness one black feather  
taking a lifetime to drift  
down from the stratosphere.