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What a Lark

by Nick Barrett

Oh shit, not again. Half past bleedin' four and the feathery bastards are at it already. Let me sleep, please. Every bleedin' morning this week. Dawn chorus my backside, middle of the night cacophony more like it.

There goes the Robin, yes, he's always one of the first off, next will come the song thrushes, yep, that's them now, right on schedule. Wrens? Warblers? Where are you? Oh there you are now, and you've invited some friends along this morning by the sounds of it, well done.

Does one of them start it off, and the others just respond? Who cares at this time of the bleedin' day.

They're just beginning to settle down a bit after the initial claim staking or whatever the hell it is they think they are up to when along comes Mr bloody Blackbird, noisiest bugger of the lot and they're all set off again. If I ever get a shotgun, preferably one with a laser sight, he'll be first to vanish in a puff of feathers. Clip his wings? I'd like to shoot his beak off.

I lie there hoping the one that does the hedge trimmer impersonation doesn't turn up today. Last Sunday I swear he had his mate with him and they were up trees at opposite sides of the house letting rip at one another.

There's another one just started in the feathery chorus, it's a starling. One of them used to come around and it could speak, I swear. Sounded like a woman shouting at her dog or cat or maybe a kid, "Jimmy, come here right now. Jimmy come here right now. Jimmy come here right now." I didn't know whether I wanted to kill her, the starling or Jimmy first, but in the name of the Dodo let me sleep.

Oh, for the wings...

I just love waking up in the morning to the sound of the birds signing their hellos to another day, don't you? Tom is lying beside me, but I don't think he hears them the way I do, he seems to prefer to sleep with a pillow over his head, in summer anyway, must be the early morning light he doesn't like.

I'll give him five more minutes before nudging him awake, I know he loves his sleep but it's his turn to make us tea in bed. It's our anniversary today and he promised me anything I like for my present. Oh I can't wait to speak to him about the pair of budgies I think would go wonderfully with the new living room curtains.

I love the dawn chorus, what a wonderful way to start a day. The low cooing of the wood pigeons, something trilling, a thrush maybe. Even the seagulls sound seasidey at this time of day.

The birds seem to take it in turns round about half past six in summer, warbling away at each other or maybe just to themselves, who knows?

I just remembered, it was birds that brought us together, sort of. That first time we met, Tom had to get me to wipe the bird poo off that lovely new dark blue suit of his. Never quite got rid of the stain, but it always reminded me of the first time we met. They say it's good luck when that happens; well we've been lucky, 20 happy years of wedded bliss.

I'll do him a special Sunday anniversary breakfast. I know he likes an egg for breakfast so for his present I'm getting him a few chickens to scratch around that lovely big garden of ours, they're poultry not birds you know. Oh I can't wait, he's had enough sleep, I'll just nudge him awake now.