

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Arrivals

by Steve Brown

Strange annunciation: the unexpected wings,
their cold coming which flecks our air,
arrived like rumours of some other world,
a bitter elsewhere. A hammering of wing-beats,
so heavy they might carry ice; this sky,
so baffled beneath them. All their plushed bodies
take on the light of our now setting sun:
gold bars.

They have come for days across numbed distance,
from far to the north, the east. What news
is stitched up in their feathers, their blacked-orbed eyes?
The sliding, cracking ice, the lash of dark seas,
some distant shuddering of earth? We cannot tell;
their bodies fill our air like torn pages.
alien papers, that carry text we cannot read.

These few birds honk across flat-watered estuaries
stories from far away; their arrival tells
of what we cannot know: beyond our horizon;
they are the ripples thrown by some dumb rock
cast in a black and bottomless sea.

They will leave one morning in some brief flurry
of dark angel wings. We will be left
with a dim sense of utmost ends,
a stretched perspective, the coming of different weathers,
an unsettled feel for the furthering gaze
of distance. We will be no longer at home
with rock, black flowers, oak-roots, swept emptiness.