

ORNITHOLOGY

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Blue jays sing on my windowsill
each morning when I wake.
I drive to work and robins flutter overhead.
I can't get rid of these fucking birds.
Maybe it's your cologne,
the receptionist at the mill offered.
That's a stupid idea, Charlene, I said.
All day outside flocks squawked
over a greasy French fry carton.
The next day I stopped wearing cologne
but a pregnant gull flew into my face,
knocking loose a gold filling.
I tongued it at work while that damned
one-legged sparrow hopped in circles
outside my window. At the end of the day
Charlene and the shipping guy
chirped behind my back.
Above my driveway a flock of crows
and their adopted cockatiel
were already circling.
You should try catching them
and selling them on ebay, my neighbor said,
wiping oil from his hands onto a rag.

You should try staying faithful to Linda
at the next holiday party, Dan, I said.
At the door was a package from Gloria.
We hadn't spoken since last Thanksgiving
when I called her a thirty-something
who'll never have a lasting relationship
until she moves from her parent's house.
We'd had our tiffs but that night
she threw her hands up and screeched
like mad, stomping the ground
in her black and red striped socks.
Inside the package was a ten-pound bag of birdseed.
I didn't know if it was an apology or threat
but I threw a few handfuls in the backyard
as I went out front and hosed
the white pancakes of shit off my Subaru.
I made a Tom Collins and stretched out
on my recliner. The new lemon tree
in the backyard was beginning to fall
from the weight of perched ravens.
Little fluorescent birds pecked at the ground in crowds
like the moving lights of a distant carnival
while big, dark colored birds
swooped overhead picking them off.
I watched until the sun set
behind distant storm clouds,
silhouetting their wide, muscled bodies
against the housing development on the hill.
Sometimes a clear and sunny sky
masks the misery behind a spring day.
I love it when the rain comes down hard.