

or bird or beast?
My mind's own eye sees a scavenger,
a bird that finds
where there's about to be
blood.

The secretary bird,

the one that gets fat
picking
bits of other birds left
in a crocodile's
teeth. If you've seen him smile
you know why
the crocodile is keen
on dental hygiene and so won't bite
that one. But

croc or not, I'll bet
it bothers even his leather gut
when he remembers what
that bird does to earn its
bread and butter.

The Painters

Two of them, hired
to make a rich man's house
whiter. They're wearing
white baggy suits specked with colors
of other people's houses.

To get the gable done
the one balances on a board across
the ladder tops and
the other (since the first
isn't able
to reach it at all) must ride
the rich man's roof like a jockey
and reach
down to paint the peak.

The jockey watches the rich
man's wife
go in the door below the
gable between his legs.
He's a dreamer

She's talking to her dog.

The gable goes straight
out from
the top one's crotch and his partner
is serious about
slapping paint on its
underside:

drops
of white spot
his
cheeks and nose, a bit
more of this
his face will be white as a
clown's.

-- James Hazard

Oshkosh, Wisconsin

"If the average market-ready duck weighs 1436 grams,
and if the average rate of weight gain is 91 grams per
week, how many days would it take to have a 500 gram
goose fat enough to market?"

one four three six,
take away five zero zero --
six and off zero is six,
three and off zero is three,
fourteen and off five is nine
(oh heart of mine) and we now have
nine-hundred and thirty-six.

Ninety per week --
seven into ninety,
seven into nine is one
and two down there --
carry zero makes twenty.
No, no (I know) ninety-one per per week --
seven into ninety-one
seven into nine is one
and two down there --
carry one makes twenty-one,
seven into twenty-one is three
even (Stephen) -- a thirteen
gram per day
weight-gain.

Thirteen into nine three six --
thirteen into ninety-three is seven
and two down there --