

THE BIRD FARMER'S FUNERAL

Your eyes were dead cold when wagons pulled
away, always full speed. Only then,
from the blue above the granary, did birds
fall in a single flush, flittering
their seven-way motion, dull as wood bees
at first, until closer, their colors came.

Even against the dawn, they were golden
with ebony wings. Had you taken time
to see them, you would have loved their manic
flying lives, so like your own, possessed
with corn and business. And since today
you rest, if rest such lying is--

your urgent

piety, like Aaron's serpent, fat, full,
dead--tonight your son walks back to the mound
of mud and clods and sows a little bag
of corn on the ground that covers your head. He leaves,
and the wild canaries circle, then fall, working
above your eyes for cracked grain. This time

you see them drop from a dusky sky, like rings
your children took away before they locked
the box, like gold slipped from your own still hands.