

ONE WELFARE

One Welfare is the interconnection between the wellbeing of humans, animals and the environment.

Moya Cannon

For the Birds

'You must change your life'

— Rainer Maria Rilke

And how we resist it, as though all change
had designs on us, yet for the birds too,
as for insects and glaciers,
for leverets and children
change we must.

For the blackbird, whose yellow, up-flung notes
and triplets fill back yards and skies,
who has sung this April week for love or lust
all morning and again at dusk
from a neighbour's blocked-off chimney pot.

For the goldfinch whose red velvet head
bobs around the feeder
and the martins who fly far, far to dig,
with little beaks, deep homes in sand.

For the feather-trousered eagle,
vice-gripper, soarer on thermals,
sky-lord who claimed and named high places
long before Fionn or Arthur might have lived.

For the bird whose harsh unwelcome rasp
annoyed us out of sleep on childhood mornings
when we longed to hear instead, summer's two
cool, perfect notes — cuck-oo, cuck-oo.

Who, then, could ever have believed
that poor, tuneless corncrake
and her down-black chicks
would vanish from the tough, long grass

or that pigeon flocks so vast they darkened
America's skies, hunted for sport and pigeon pies,
would be reduced to one poor bird,
who died, imprisoned, in a Cincinnati zoo.

Or who could believe
that little garden birds whose forebears
brought song from Australia
so many million years ago,

who, when the world fell silent, sang on,
who gave us heart this long, last year,
are being starved and poisoned
by our careless ways.

We know it's not too late, but almost,
the cost already runs too high –
we, who still have a choice,
must change our lives.



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