

WHO NOTICED SUCH THINGS

Padraig O Broin

He could have fingered each blade of new green that first week out. Tulips foreshadowed glory he might have named, but wouldn't. And forsythia, japonica, lilac.

The birds convened. Robin made his lawn a tilt-yard; grackle strutted arrogant of yellow eye while cracking doled-out corn. Impudent jay, cardinal calling "girlie-girlie", and oriole fluted while, hung on invisible air, a ruby-throat performed—living flames that blazed out of sky itself part of that unnamed glory.

Summer was warm and winds blew gently. When it rained it picked the night to do it. Lying awake he heard it tap on roof and pane; knew water bringing life to earth—knew morning sun draw up clouds' gift till they, gathered again on evening's edge, returned the rain to earth.

It tired his head to think that cycle through.

All summer long he looked and named; touched, but never plucked, that baby coon he could have tamed but wouldn't.

Autumn grew into glory's self that year. They took him driving over his winding northern roads where curve on curve paraded colour from green through golden brown to gold to crimson to flame that dazzled eye and mind at once till where the glory lived—around above or in his head itself—mind couldn't wrestle with any longer. He was tired.

That last night he went outside
to watch the stars. A clean clear night.
Air nipped. Past full, October's moon
late to rise but stars held enough of glory.

And thin, high, disquietingly sweet
he heard them going over, migrating birds
whose calls he couldn't put a name to, though could have
once; impersonal birds that brought the spring,
now going away.

To come again, though.

"The birds are flying south" he said, and knew
the year the doctors gave him over now.

"He must have got a chill that night" the daughter
said. They all agreed.

The trees stood
naked in day's grey chill.

And after
they were home again, and warmed, the snow
came, covering over earth that spades
had rearranged that morning.