

CATHERINE J. STEWART

PARALLAX

We lived on the river's west
a mile from our neighbours
with no god to pray to

only the advent of geese
a new season.
First frost

shivered in the power
lines blurring our southern view
murmured to wing

beat, that ecstasy
of air and feathers—
flight. We never knew

where they went
one day in the sloughs
the next in the sky

and diminishing.

MIKEY

He was a bombardier in the war,
only glass between him and the sky.
Never forgave his farm for grounding him,
the thirst of soil. He found flight again
in brown glass, its tender curvature
of light. But the bottles
drained too soon.

No one was home when he entered
our house, the dog gone—nose deep
in the sedge. He looked for booze
in the cupboards and under the bed,
tipped back the empties on the counter
to taste the jilt of foam, then tried to leave
but the dog growled outside.

Hours later we came home to his rusted truck
nudged up against the woodpile, the dog asleep
on the doorstep and him slumped at the table.

We laughed as children do, who point pellet guns
at crows and shoot lead through their wings.