

Joyce Wilson

The Chicken Hawk

Now we suspect the speckled hawk has been
Here many times, the reason anxious crows
And jays intensify their cries, and spin
For no apparent cause, until she shows

Her profile from her perch. There, pressed in flat
Against the trunk, she hides in spotted light.
She looks across her shoulder at the fat
Contented hens below, soon bunched in tight.

Now I can count how frequently she came,
Recalling where two chickens in the snow
Had died at separate times yet with the same
Delivery of force, from high to low.

The one who gashed and opened up the breast,
Consumed the innards, scooping out the heart—
And left the head, and wings and feet, the rest
To rot—fulfilled her designated part.

Today I listen for her quiet climb.
She turns and drops down close as if she would
Negotiate—but no, she needs no time
To map the layout of our neighborhood.

I cannot say her actions have outweighed
Distortions of her predatory nature;
Aloft, borne on the arrow she has made,
She strikes to live and does not pause to torture,

And does not wish but takes, without an argument,

Joyce Wilson

As long ago, she proved the world was hers.
Her pinions weave through each impediment—
The outstretched oaks, the prickly firs—

And gather severed shreds, from strife to strife,
That might explain divisions in her ways—
The softest down, the sharpest knife,
The fierceness in the cry that she betrays.