

*Nobody knows precisely when the nightjars arrived,
the auks, the bitterns littering the eaves and lintels,
as numinous and plenty as sunspots on the water.*

Shearwaters fluttered to the jute rugs, to splinter and seed—

*We opened our cans and doors and stumbled over
morning shrikes stealing from the pantry,*

the linnets bedding down

in cotton sheets, kitchen linens. We found the eider

swallowing paper bags under the sink, the blinds

dotted with the crumbs and rumblings of wrynecks, cedarwings

and tanagers humming through knotholes, throating their notes

in the radiator.

The Birds

They left quietly,

like the night-hem of the falling sky. We pried up floorboards

and peeked behind doors, shut the windows.

The house shuddered. We slept under stones.

We spoke of lights shaking in the trees.

Ellene Glenn Moore