

Natural

Pigeons fat as prelates
in antique paintings
strut and peck
cement for scraps.

Their raiment gleams
shabby, Salvation
Army colors, gutter
water and gasoline.

Shaped like cursive
capitals, Dutch shoes,
they roost at intervals
on lines and roofs.

My brother and I
my mother says mimicked
in cribs their warbles and coos.
They people every city,

rise from sidewalks,
stutter over skylines
to their own applause.
Last winter a crow

and seagull quarreled
over bread at dawn
as a rabble of pigeons
and I looked on.

Aaron Anstett