
from Vanishing Point Nigel McLoughlin

I

The instant before it disappears along the apex of a roof where a collared dove ululates to an apple tree grey as the lead beak caught in the sun or the honeysuckle where nothing moves and a blackbird pipes back to the light in next door’s garden with ridges the colour of a sandstone cloud-top when they settle into strata struts its feathers and becomes

II

a strut of feather and a thing becoming bird of prey or gull or shape seen from below to grow to various classes of W or M in a child’s painting that might be mapped by Pappus of Alexandria elegantly on to itself or whether the observer catches or prefers to catch the upstroke or the down know that this instant oscillates between two isomorphs and is neither yet just before the sun sets and shadows throw their doubt about like weight

III

where doubt abouts and waits like a lorry-filled summer-air greasing through a restricted-opening window on the foul night of motorway service station where dark is broken by the three am truck horn of a fat driver turning in his cab mid-sleep perhaps by accident and catching it with his foot at the critical moment just to wake a father from his sleep in time to catch his youngest in the turn of headlights as the light searches in the corners