

GEORGE H. GURLEY, JR.

BIRD SONGS

You say you need to be alone.
I hear you say: it's over.
You say the rain is ticking in the gutters.
I say the sump pump's croaking in its hole.
In lumber yards too the rain is ticking,
dropping from the slick roofs
onto black barrels of roofing tar.
I hear the barred owl say
let there be silence when the wood rat runs.
You hear him hoot about the ticking of time.

The moon wavers in the potholes
below the turnpike bridge.
You hear suspirations of the tires.
I hear a coot flapping from the shore.
I aspired and in my fall
the basement rose,
a steepled puissance in the air.
You chose the bell that hung above us.
I chose the pocket where the scaup duck dove.
Beneath the promises of meadowlarks
the grave bassoon of gravity groaned.
You heard the wires gossiping.
I heard the cicadas drone.
I crooned hold me closer forever.
You crooned lover let me go.
The ear emeritus that always listens
heard us hearing,
heard aviaries in the stone.