

For three days now

For three days now there have been no birds.
The wrens have gone from the drystone walls,
blackbirds aren't here to scavenge the grass
or the goldfinches to flash their wings.

I never realised how their songs and warnings
ringing across the garden and over the hills
were woven into every moment,
how, when swallows rode the thermals
or starlings spiralled against the sky
they were so much a part of my world.

Seeds and nuts hang untouched,
hollies and mountain ash still have their fruit;
the quiet is painful to the ears
like those cold, empty moments
when you can't believe news of a death.

The hundred years beech was felled at dawn
the river is overflowing
and there are no birds.

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