

The Goose

Even though a constant babbler
The goose is an exemplary,
Not at all a silly bird,
Who mates for life, who tends to fly
Tight formation with those five
closest members of her family;

Wh every vernal equinox
Since the pleistocene
Triangulates her flock
North from the plains and prairies
Heavy with corn and rice,
Daylight egging her on;

A fishwife, a scold who'll shrill
Her tongue at you, honk and hiss,
Clack her jaws and beat the wind
At his own game; a thrifty shopper
With bold eye who hurries home
As the ice melts under her.

Twelve gauge shot or some such load
Has tattered her pinions and til
(You can't tell the sexes apart in flight
The way the sportsman sees them),
But her wings are as strong as her need
To nest beside the six month sun

Rolling around the Arctic horizon
Dim as consciousness in the blood:
Still as fish in the polar sea
She'll cruise the bay, paddle the shore,
Lose one brood, raise one more
Help them to gaggle to swim and to fly

Unless she's one of the less lucky ones
Who goes alone in the midst of the race
Widow black mourning pulled up to her chin ,
Threading the skein of familial V's
Calling for those who were lost in the south
between fall and break-up at winter's end.