

## 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;

Who 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 flack  
Has tattered her pinions and tail  
(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.