

Snow

I knew I could go back into the dream, as in
to a condition of music, *adagio cantabile*,
the one note held so as to enshadow itself
in the last room of the house I came awake from
to find that, overnight, actual snow had fallen
into which eight striped birds with yellow breasts
and one ingenious smaller brown-gray bird
were pecking about starved and confused. Confusion
is a tiny madness left in the commonplace.
It does not spring from anyplace quite so fine
as the country palazzo whose irregular padrone
will rush forth wildly to pluck his mandolin
at a girl's window. Nor were these birds so mad
they swallowed their connection with the common
or freed themselves to flex the bones that lift them
into a sky uncommonly too ruinous
to keep more than a nuance of flesh and blood
before it disappears in a spurt of wings.
If I could find that spot along the wall
where the shadow's finger lifted from strings
still moaning in the glow the sun had left
by the opening in the curtains she hid behind,
I could come near enough to call to her
and wait to hear her step along the floor.