

Birdsong

It is said that songbirds learn their song from their parents and the skill of their song varies on their ability to learn. The mimetic texture of birdsong can be likened to the mimetic quality of the photograph. The character and the density of the song is not given, as for every songbird there is no definitive knowledge of their song or clarity of how they will sound. Each songbird's voicing exists in an 'inaugural haze' or 'mist' that interrupts the knowing, hearing and even seeing of the bird. Here, the experience of the photograph can be alluded to — the ephemeral quality of seeing a photograph is similar to the ephemeral moment of hearing birdsong; the time of seeing and hearing becomes a momentary space of seeing and not seeing, of hearing and not hearing. The song, as a collection of sounds, forms for both bird and human a sending out into the world 'in search of auditors', of those who will hear the song and form a wider soundbody, forming a continuum of our mutuality.

It is said that some birds have two voices and sing from two larynges. One larynx has a tendency to dominate the other, leading to the production of a combined sound. Working with the doubling within the voice, the songbird's double voice is analogous to the performative event of the photograph. That there is within the voice a trace of an invisible voice and its effect, adds a layer of the unseen within every sound, amplifying the hidden soundings within the image and the doubling of the memory-image that attends to all photographic images.

What you are about to 'hear' is the sound and recall of a memory-image and its existence in a wider world. The event involves a window and two songbirds, a Bohemian waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) and a great tit (*Parus major*). It begins at the moment the image emerges and ceases the moment it is no longer seen.

Look, another species, circles the waxwing /
Possibly, maybe, not
Up and down, up and down, up and down, down and up, down, down
down / on the roof's edge.

Great tit: tea-tea-cher, Tea-cher / tea-tea-cher, 21
Tea-cher / tea-tea-cher
Left larynx: higher pitch: tea-cher / tea-tea-tea / tea-tea /
tear / cher
Right larynx: – cher, – – cher, – – cher, – – cher,
– – cher, – – cher

And the beak opens and a thought goes on'

Look, another species, circles the waxwing / Possibly, maybe, not
Up and down, up and down, up and down,
down and up, down, down down / on the roof's edge.

Great tit: tea-tea-cher, Tea-cher / tea-tea-
cher, Tea-cher / tea-tea-cher
Left larynx: higher pitch: tea-cher / tea-tea-tea / tea-tea /
tear / cher
Right larynx: – cher, – – cher, – – cher, – –
cher, – – cher, – cher

And then another, and then another, and then another, and then another song.

Looking across at the waxwing / Possibly, maybe, not
A hole in its face, a hole in its face, a hole in its face.

'And the beak opens and a thought goes on'

Look, a Bohemian waxwing, down on the roof's edge.
The body still and unstirring, still, and unstirring, still and unstirring,
still and unstirring, unstirring, unstirring, unstirring.

A great tit looking across at the waxwing, blinded.
A great tit, flies soundless / Possibly, maybe not
Soundless, soundless, soundless, soundless.

A waxwing falls voiceless from the roof's edge /Possibly, maybe, not
Voiceless, voiceless, voiceless, voiceless

An irruption, the bloodied stain, the stain, has slowed the moment down, slowed it all down, to a time so slow it locks time into itself, to an inert matter, of flashes that trail bloodied feathers of pigeons who have flown through an open window, flown into a turbulence of walls and boundaries. A cat waits, with striking claws and the walls fill with red stains; vermilion red, red, red writing, slithering across moving walls, a primal script that marks and thirstily congeals. The blood-writing everywhere and on everything, armchair, fireplace, window, rug, a murder of pigeons, frantic, fitting, hitting and calling the kit of pigeons dissolved into red scatterings of loose feathers and the hay-like smell of blood, a cartographic blood map, of 30 years past, returns the body to the nacreous shivering of irruption.