

creatures of
All the ~~things~~ in this world that do not know they have names.

use a bird list

Coots, the hick cousins of the duck world, paddle by, nodding in

nothing to it,

perpetual self-encouragement: ~~the~~ got it now, the feet go under the

water, the head goes on top. Contemplate the coot and you wonder what

other jokes nature may be up to.

WINTER

use with Day 41

Ducks seen at Shilshole, Mar. 2, '78:

for "Points of Light"--

It takes a wash of light, too, to bring out the impossible color of a mallard's head--that tone perpetually deciding between black and rich green, or maybe even an urge to purple. The even more subtle tone of the goldeneye's pompadour...

Day 15: show Carol going to class

WINTER

-to the impartial watcher,

But birds: they are the ~~xx~~ true population of this neighborhood.

--bushtits on birch branches like monks riding bell-ropes.

a wood duck's eyelid closes from the bottom up

WINTER

Bird behavior and presence: walk the street, count the houses and backyards-- is this the multiple of what goes on ~~in~~ out my window? And what of the geographical multiples beyond that?

--The fence outside the study sliding door, where the song sparrow, an evident bachelor, goes up and down the alternating boards: I intend to replace the fence, but postpone and postpone. Am I running the acreage for the birds?

WINTER

Use with jay-killing-snake episode (and hawking incident, and grosbeaks?), as list of several questions at end:

How did the ant know the body onto which it clambered was dead? (had been alive only minutes before)

Why didn't the jay persevere in eating snake, after having troubled to flash down and kill it?

Why had the snake crawled onto the dark garden dirt? (day was only mildly warm)

Entire episode could begin: Dispatches from the combat zone outside my window.
--I am the watcher, like man in observation balloon.

WINTER

Birds' combat zone: literally no-man's-land (no-man's-air); no place for humans in this darting struggle.

WINTER

First warplanes looked like birds--feathered points of profile of wing-backs--and first combat was like falconry, the winged OO sent up from a close-tethered point to strike at another winged creature, etc. Planes since have evolved toward bullet shape, analogy with devpt of hunting.

birds - flocks in tree tops, March 15

winter

The camelia tree next door favored by jays: the branches jump as they whoosh in for landings.

WINTER

May 18, '78, 10:30 a.m.--Standing looking out at strawberry patch just now, heard an odd, irregular thumping sound toward front of the house. Thought it must be a neighbor doing something, but then along the woodpile to the right of the window, I could see a robin flying against the window into the shop. It would fly the few feet from the top of the wood into the glass, hit it with a fairly heft tunk sound, drop ~~again~~ back and do it again. It had been doing so several times before I saw it, and did it nine more, in the space of less than a minute, while I watched. I went away to carefully open the door to the shop and get a head-on view, but the bird had quit by then. The shop window is centered with a nebula of white streaks, like a Pollock abstractionist painting--this bird, or several, must have been butting for a long time. And a day or so ago, I was startled, while walking to my desk, to see a ~~h~~ robin, probably the same one, flutter up to the study window-doors, veering off just before a collision, 2 or 3 times. I suppose this is nesting behavior of some sort? The darkened interior of the shop must somehow seem attractive.

May 26, 12:45--

More on the fixated robin trying to batter into the shop. On my way back from looking for the mail, happened to step inside the shop door just as the robin arrived. Quietly closed the door to watch: the bird flung itself, by actual count, 35 times at the window, from the woodpile about 2 feet below. Most often the robin would fly up with its breast meeting full onto the window, ~~the~~ its feet making a small quick EEK sound on the glass at the same time, and drop back, wait a few seconds and do it again. But there were 2 or 3 flurries, especially one at the end, where the bird flung itself several times in a row, as rapidly as it could launch itself. And once the bird turned away and sidled off a bit along the woodpile, then turned as if to take the window by surprise. Once the bird opened its bill wide, as if swallowing--or making a silent protest.

--I am dumbstruck at the effort of hurling one's body 35 times, at near-full force, against a solid object: what would the equivalent be in a human body?

--The white-patterned, scraped "bullseye" of where the bird has been flinging itself.

--After watching this, I was moved to put a cardboard box in front of the window, in hopes the bird would go off elsewhere and finally nest/

--the unnerving robin

WINTER

Birds:

May '78: for some months, we have had a single song sparrow on the premises, hippitying across the lawn, visiting the garden, traipsing in the grass-and-fern overgrowth on the bank of hill. Seems entirely self-sufficient, business-like, co-exists with the quantity of robins, pair of jays, occasional towhees.

WINTER

Birds:

Up on the rim of the hill, I think at the Williamses, is a rooster, daftly crowing any time of the day. Illegal (against zoning), and his sound is startling, a barnyard galoot tromping around in suburbia, like lumberjack boasting in town.

WINTER

May 24, '78: half a dozen grosbeaks taking quick positions in the leafy vine maple branches outside the kitchen window, giving their brief questioning cry. yellow bandit's mask across the eyes of the males. Lovely warmth of colors--yellow and white bounded by black--unusual in birds of this area. Their heavy utensils of beaks.

The birds drop from branches to graze on the gravel driveway, after a bit will look up gravely, seem to consider, and then the flock blasts away all together (like bandits in retreat?).

--robberly-looking

Same day, minutes before: robin again arrived atop woodpile, tried to batter way thru shop window--I counted half a dozen tries before it flew away to top of fence.

WINTER

--birds as tropical fish of the air

--a birdmonger behind the trees, now sending out OO, now displaying OO

--jays are the clever galoot among birds

--the trees are their shores

**jays brash as society burglars

--a day of birds is a palimpsest, the same air imprinted with OO, then OO...

WINTER

birds as swimmers of the air; the exotic fish of the aboveground

WINTER

bushtits move thru trees, only half-catchable by eye; there is motion, as if a leaf has zoomed from one branch to another, to try the new (vanatage). When they are seen, they are like fat little monks riding bealropes.

winter

Oct. 27, '77, 8:30 am: After finishing tough pages at end of Flip in $\frac{1}{2}$ life, stood and glanced out glass door and found flock of juncos feeding, 8-10' away.

Tiny darts of their bills, here-there-everywhere, like random splashes of rain. Vibrancy of their hopping, skipping pattern came through to me.

winter

Nov. 29, '77: dozen or two bushtits outside the study window, flinging themselves absolutely upside down into grass and trees like trapeze troupe gone mad. Only a second or two in one place.

winter

the day bright with birds

winter

Dreams like bright birds flocking in ~~the~~ the night.

winter

voting with their wings (birds' invisible decisions to fly)

winter

bushtits falling backwards in air, deliberately, then catching themselves...

winter

birds in bright greatcoats
(rich)

winter

Watching birds: like living on a busy corner (death curve?) and waiting for accidents.

Winter

Why the boys at Waterloo got the bird

Feb. 9, '73 ^{P.3} By PETER CLIFF *Daily Mail*

HOMEGOING
London commuters
were halted in
their tracks by the
booming station
loudspeakers
at Waterloo.

'Leave that pigeon
alone,' it said. . . .
'Leave that pigeon
alone.'

Then: 'Get out of
the station.'

It was station an-
nouncer Babs Alquist,
whose eagle eye had
spotted three young-
sters ill-treating a
pigeon.

She watched them
try to stamp on it for
a few seconds . . .
'Then I had to make
the announcement.
It went all over the
station,' she said.

'I shouldn't have
done it but I'm an
animal lover and I
couldn't bear to
overlook cruelty.'

Sixty-year-old
Babs, of Chiswick,
London, W., added:
'Some people looked
a bit taken aback
but a lot of them
saw what was hap-
pening and I'm sure
they sympathised
with me. The kids
ran off anyway.'

British Rail said:
'It was a spon-
taneous reaction by
the announcer.'

One commuter
said: 'Everyone was
stopping and staring
and looking for
pigeons. When she
said "Get out of the
station" I thought
all the trains had
been cancelled.'

WINTER

Birdlessness is unthinkable.

bushtits on birch branches like monks riding bell-ropes

A robin gathering straws near the garden--they stick out of his
beak like cat's whiskers

Juncoes fly fast and hard toward the ground as if thrown, then seem to slide in the air to a landing

A crow lands on the fir branch outside the window, sways up and down, like a pirate on a pitching ship deck (cruel dark beak, baleful look)

the perched hawk unsheathes its wings

the birds made morning with

Winter

Birds watching

From Mr F. A. Cutter

Sir, I had a lot of trouble last year with birds eating my seeds. A chap advised me to put up a scarecrow so I did. The birds were impressed and fetched their friends to admire it. The chap said "don't be static—change it around a bit", so I did, and the birds' friends brought their friends. Now they sit in rows in the trees waiting to see my latest epic. I have the happiest and best fed lot of wild birds in the kingdom.

Yours in despair,

F. A. CUTTER,

29 Broxbourne Road,
Orpington, Kent.

• Times

May 2, '73

p. 19

Birds watching

From Mr Norman Smith

Sir, Mr Cutter (May 2) should take heart; the best is yet to come. "His" birds are obviously only at the hors d'oeuvre stage.

Last year I netted over our raspberries but inadvertently left a small hole. The birds were not only queuing up at this hole but other birds were busking the queue with little violins made from the remnants of my pampas which they had denuded for lining their nests.

Despite the fact that the 492 tenants under my eaves pay no rent (and have free bath water and daily snacks provided), they will not accept my offer of 50-50 sharing of the garden produce. They demand per capita sharing and, short of gunboat diplomacy, I have come to the conclusion that the only way is to accept this gracefully.

Yours faithfully,

NORMAN SMITH, Director,
Smith Interior Designs Limited,
Myron Works, Myron Place, SE13.
May 3.

• Times

May 7, '73

p. 17

this is a fallow time in the air

winter

me and birds: I am in the glass hill in their midst; somewhat badgerlike, watching out as the glass occasionally kills them...

Jan. 6, '79--cold clear weather continues. It is like living in the Montana Rockies again, but without the clouting wind. There is a stillness to this weather, a kind of disbelief ~~that~~ the winter has about itself.

WINTER

Birds when they are randy

Jays: (or bushtits) -- what vacancies they leave in the air, an abandonment~~s~~...
(absence)

some terrible

Jay cry, like rods of odd substance briskly rasped against each other.

stellar jay's sound: icepick staccato

used

To be without birds would be to suffer a kind of color-blindness,
a glaucoma gazing over one of the planet's special brightnesses.