

After the End

Because I left him there so you could see
his body, broken by the fall, the hawk's

small relatives hopped from higher branches
and called a kind of glee that he was dead.

By afternoon, the ground around him dusted

with feathers and gravel kicked up, he looked
like a bundle of rags or something tossed

from a car and tumbled there, but still
graceful, neck flung back in the moss and dirt,
and the yellow claws curled to question marks.

Then the trees were quiet, the other voices
gone. When a car turned into the driveway,

I saw it wasn't you. They sat a while,
four men, the same dark suits, carefully
tended hair. Missionaries: I could tell

from the window where I stood beyond
their line of sight. All their doors opened

as if by a common feeling or something
unseen and insistent in the air.

They did not see the hawk lying there, dead

from its long fall, or age, or driven down
by the crows nest in the pines above.

They did not see me. I moved back, behind
the curtain, and wished you home, who could see
these things and know what is beloved, what is
dead.