

MICHAEL ROBINS

The Birds of Massachusetts Bay

In a northern colony, the settlers begin
with rooflines part timber, part God.

Doors line up in every hall as written,
no pigs involved. News is not adequate,

let alone malnourished words part cloud
in a lake no less cloud. We, first settlers,

can't believe misfortune for our spades
are unaccounted. We'd take the birds

if our arms could hold steady; we frighten
them away, poor scarecrows in the field.

Falling asleep is dangerous. Each night
the wilds scatter our quiet fire, relentless

to the wooden flesh of this early town.
Our child drifts thoroughly in a wind

contained by the shore. Every ship a ship
too late, our thin blankets ill, mornings

we spread them well to the kind people
of the new country. Watch over us Lord,

our Love, our Load, as winter settles in.
Our song, the only song, is lofty as stone.