



In honor of National Poetry Month  
April 2021

ON HEARING A CUCKOO AT PENTECOST

*Lackford*

You are not brave. But what does bravery mean, here. Tongues of fire  
distributed like so many paper crowns. Little flames, permitting heat, light.  
That is what you are, hidden in your narrow band of wood.  
You have stolen something  
again. You may be held responsible.  
Your one note of bargaining, your other note of faith, a garland  
that seizes what it paraphrases.  
You are not aware of any ruin. Or, you are ruin,  
perched inside the ripe conflagration, its emerald knot. A thinking jewel.  
What must it be like, to know oneself for what one really is.  
Bravery has no part in it. The flame  
extending as far down as the tongue, the human member, but no further.

--G.C. Waldrep

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