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| **Sparrow** *By Norman MacCaig*  He’s no artist.  His taste in clothes is more  dowdy that gaudy.  And his nest – that blackbird, writing  pretty scrolls on the air with the gold nib of his beak,  would call it a slum.  To stalk solitary on lawns,  to sing solitary in midnight trees,  to glide solitary over gray Atlantics –  not for him: he’s rather  a punch-up in a gutter.  He carries what learning he has  lightly – it is, in fact, based only  on the usefulness whose result  is survival. A proletarian bird.  No scholar.    But when winter soft-shoes in  and these other birds –  ballet dancers, musicians, architects –  die in the snow  And freeze to branches,  watch him happily flying  on the O-levels and A-levels  of the air. | **Sparrow** *By Norman MacCaig*  He’s no artist.  His taste in clothes is more  dowdy that gaudy.  And his nest – that blackbird, writing  pretty scrolls on the air with the gold nib of his beak,  would call it a slum.  To stalk solitary on lawns,  to sing solitary in midnight trees,  to glide solitary over gray Atlantics –  not for him: he’s rather  a punch-up in a gutter.  He carries what learning he has  lightly – it is, in fact, based only  on the usefulness whose result  is survival. A proletarian bird.  No scholar.    But when winter soft-shoes in  and these other birds –  ballet dancers, musicians, architects –  die in the snow  And freeze to branches,  watch him happily flying  on the O-levels and A-levels  of the air. |
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