

“Crane”

Here, into this place, in this matter, detail,
let the crane come the same way that I saw it,
that I saw, that I saw from the periphery first
some movement, a closure, enormous wings just after
their furthest extension like the one far moment in cruelty
at which point everything changes: it comes in because
it decides to, stiff feet jutting from under the collapse
of the body, still far above the brittle tree. The brilliant tree

bends, my God, the bird is in it, unbalanced, flailing,
huge on its twig, determined, spastic, jerking out a wing
-the head-a wing, keeping its place, earning it? I could only
barely see, swinging the binoculars up every few feet, dizzy
with the shifting proximity (real-but-far, near-but-flat), blinking,
losing the tree, reading the timberline left to right, finding again
the bird, its crisis, the teetering needed to see it all.

When I was nine I tried to break my arm for love,
telling the left arm to go dead, picking
the wrist up, aiming for the corner where the alcove began,
straining over the small distance, swinging over
and over, brightening the surface of the body
against the surface of the wall.

In time, in time
craning, I say crane.
Steady, where the bird perches now,
Where it never saw me.

He, I say. Her Hero Heron
This bird in this tree. Until the minute it leaves.