

A Poem  
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*October 24, 2011*

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BIRDS OF PREY

The cream breast of the hawk glides overhead.  
Titmice scatter seeds by the coal bin.  
O lay me down in the sleep of the dead.  
In Pennsylvania hills, developers steal in.

Titmice scatter seeds by the coal bin.  
We skied to a field where new houses rose.  
In Pennsylvania hills, developers steal in;  
on rural roads the farms foreclose.

We skied to a field where new houses rose  
on the phantom fencerow where creatures hid.  
Along rural roads the farms foreclose,  
and land goes for the highest bid.

On the phantom fencerow where creatures hid  
you cursed the bulldozer and the company men.  
Where land goes for the highest bid  
you count bear and deer among your kin.

You cursed the bulldozer and the company men.  
An owl hoots to her mate across the pines.  
You count bear and deer among your kin.  
The great horned ignores all boundary lines.

An owl hoots to her mate across the pines.  
You split your wood and stack it by the shed.  
The great horned ignores all boundary lines  
and claims the winter sky instead.

You split your wood and stack it by the shed,  
Pine-tar the skis and leave them on the porch.  
The owl takes a crow, leaves feathers where it bled.  
The cream breast of the hawk flies overhead.

From Robin Becker, *Domain of Perfect Affection*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006)