

Blasé Nestlings

That nidus, that beak-woven bowl,
built quickly of gathered twigs
braided snugly under and over
rhododendron branches, looking
to all like hundreds of dove claws
gripping each other tightly...and brown.

Yes, I was Peeping Mike (I think subtly),
kneeling belly to radiator veins to watch
too nasty, too wet then too scruffy
chick heads, first popping like Jacks
in the twig box, then gape-mawed
yawping for a parent's crop milk.
I only filled the feeder seed tube.

How could you...just leave...with the kids?

When the little ones had real feathers,
I walked to the train and rode to Haymarket
for produce, my own version of seed.
I hiked back up the hill three hours later.
(But you have neither wristwatch nor wrist.)

Our nest is empty. All five of you gone...
I had imagined a Disney cartoon
of fledglings perching on rhody branches,
then plunging out, not down.
From biped to biped, I wanted to see
that minute they did what I never can
— take wing for once and forever more.

Only your masterpiece of weaving remains.
Birds don't do courtesy.
We have signed no contract.
And I cannot speak dove.

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