

SMALL BIRDS IN WINTER
(a double villanelle)

In puddles, pools the rain makes rings, sings in the hollow where the center drops.
The gale would drown you in its wail and keen. Glean what you can before you are too weak.
At dawn, at last, the sun. They dry their wings. Wings to lift them when the falling stops.

Out of water wells the start of things, springs from ridge lines, mountain tops.
Run rivulet to river, a gathering skein. Convene in clouds that storm and wreak.
In puddles, pools this rain makes rings. Sings in the hollow where the center drops.

But it's light that sparks their beginnings, brings into being their bonding blocks,
Junco, finch, paired chains of pyrimidine--purine, form the tongue all the living speak.
At dawn, at last, the sun. They dry their wings, wings to lift them when the falling stops.

Rung-linked ladder, helixed, double springs, strings of code, towhee, thrush, that now unlocks
Copies down the name in cytosine--guanine, adenine--thymine, writes the yellow eye streak.
In puddles, pools the rain makes rings. Sings in the hollow where the center drops.

A well, a leaf, a door turns and in its turnings, swings open, spreads, uncoils the flocks.
Each trigram, sparrow, wren, spells out unseen, protein, warbler made flesh, made feather, beak.
At dawn, at last, the sun. They dry their wings, wings to lift them when the falling stops.

Wind whips a branch a chickadee clings, slings bird to ground where the leaf-mold rots.
It finds shelter in a maple's lee and preens, cleans feathers, calls, calls its name into the bleak.
In puddles, pools the rain makes rings. Sings in the hollow where the center drops.
At dawn, at last, in sun, they dry their wings, wings that lift them, now, as the falling stops.

first appeared in North Coast Squid