

TAYLOR BACHAND

CROW WATCHER

The poem “Crow Watcher” was inspired by Don McKay’s poetry in *Camber* and by a theory of counterpoint that I applied to McKay’s work.¹ In the poem “Glenn Gould, Humming,” McKay nods to Gould’s propensity for “contrapuntal” music, where several distinct melodic voices are interwoven—polyphonic and interdependent. This notion of simultaneity and independence is a pattern in McKay’s poetry, especially in the relationship between the poet and the ever-present birds. McKay’s work invites a poetic ecology that dwells in an observation that attempts to comprehend some shared experience of existence, and yet is non-dialectical and does not demand complete harmony or comprehension. Rather, McKay’s work, and my own, traces multiple, interdependent existences that run alongside one another.

¹McKay, Don. *Camber: Selected Poems 1983-2000*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2004.

There are two crows outside my bedroom window
in the parking lot
light evening rain
the rat looks matted
the crows look glossy like burned wood.

One crow angles its beak into the rat's
upturned belly
and there is a quiet snapping sound
and the crow hides the
pink bit of gut
in a joint in the fence.

Later, one of the crows comes
and caws to me
through the silvery window
gripping the black metal railing
until I come
to laugh it away.

In the morning
the sun shines through my window
onto my bed
I lie naked in the hot square
conscious of the heat and light
on my thighs, back, and belly
reading about a man and a woman
hoeing furrows in black earth.

Yesterday the rat looked soaked and bloated
today it is leathery and desiccated
later still
in the green dimness of evening
it is raw and red
like the inside of a fig.