

THE AUGURY OF CROWS

We used to count crows overhead.
One for sorrow, two for mirth—

when they vanished from these parts, flew
into the night and disappeared,

some said they'd flown off
to consort with the devil,

others blamed the acts of gods,
and some, the crimes of men.

Yet we never saw one bird
fall from the sky,
never saw one floating down the river.

It's frightening to face
what nothingness portends—

the hollow silence left behind,
the blank page of sky,

the incomprehensible—

the hoards of people stranded
on their rooftops

that waited for promises
that never arrived.

The eleventh crow's the hope
that beats its wings inside one's chest

until its wings are broken and it dies,
the secret, never told, of why.