

Vines

Stop sap

entwining the trunk, grow forty  
rings, six inches thick,

the vines take trees down  
left along long enough,  
limb-breaking heavy tangle

hauling itself into the canopy  
of oak and cottonwood both.  
Hard orange berries

lighting the woods for the birds  
to eat the seeds, ready them  
for sprouting in their flyover's waste.

Saw them tight to the ground,  
poison the roots through the stumps,  
cut them as high as you can reach,

let every thick rope fall to harvest,  
until you are drenched in the juice  
living up to the species name,

Asiatic Bittersweet,  
until you're not native either.  
They swing down empty from the sky,

another crop sprouts below  
and the trees are freed to make more buds,  
more sweet than bitter for a time.

## Territory

The accent of crows  
reveals destination  
not origin  
the caws up in the stark branches  
deflated into drowsy quacks  
cut from an ill wind on a cloudy day they keep trying  
to warn off a trespasser  
from territory that was never theirs  
cawing back and forth  
one to another  
get thee to thy thuggery  
but they can't

\* \* \*

Birds don't hear the songs  
of other bird species  
different bandwidths  
frequencies make one territory  
into an overlapping many  
sing right past each other  
warbling their particular instinct  
non-birds who listen hear  
song from all territories at once  
then a hawk glides to a tree  
and they hide quietly

\* \* \*

When the city's rumble drowns them  
songbirds tweak their songs

leave out the low sweet notes  
edge the volume up to strident  
streamline the melody  
yet still can find a little love territory  
a connection  
as a less alluring mate

\* \* \*

At dusk a lightly trotting turkey  
obviously can't fly  
then gobbles on big reckless wings  
up to a high branch  
and sleeps lying down  
if it falls  
it better wak  
before the ground arrives

Trespasses

How specific is forgiveness?  
Forgiving your mother  
magnanimously for all  
she did or didn't do  
doesn't teach about how  
you focused the lens  
taking it all in  
on your slant  
even that small  
brought it about somehow  
by what you were at the time  
your peculiar magnetism of self.  
It doesn't consider

whether by letting it happen  
that way you hurt her back.  
Even the smallest event some believe  
are already written  
the actors can't act differently  
whatever they truly intend  
making forgiveness a blessing  
straight out of Oedipus' final escape.  
So be specific in remembering  
mutual trespassed, what it  
would profit you to forgive.