

Aeronautics

As a child I watched my grandfather
 fix his gaze on the expanse
 of Tennessee sky - always
wondering how the beating of wings could
provoke such passion in the eyes of an old man.

Each one, each fluttering dot against the blue horizon
 was a beginning that grew wistfully toward
 an ocean-ceiling, white-capping,
surging and swirling about furiously over our heads
as the world was drenched in shadow.

'Bird blather,' as he said it was, could only be
 interpreted by the wise. And I yearned
 for wisdom and the rugged wishes
of the young each afternoon I sat Indian-style in a
plastic lawn chair - looking up – learning how.

When I learned to read, my grandfather introduced
 me to the Encyclopedia Britannica over a
 glass of milk and a Snickers bar.
There were whole pages of words that gave
themselves to each bird – I read them all.

And years have gone by, giving fledglings the chance
 to do what they do, leaving the nest, seeking
 out wisdom and worms – and yet somehow,
still looking to the sky for answers and listening for the
cry of a prairie falcon or the song of a whip-poor-will.

