

Karl Plank

WITNESSED IN THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR

To this I swear:

One winter afternoon, late,
as the sky softened in subtlety,
a mated pair of red-tails
circled in a *pas de deux* of magic light,
curling down to the broken elbow
of the bare winged elm,
their hollow bones landing
in utter synchrony.

No hoarse hissy screech
downslurred to tear the air
and when talons gripped the branch
no vibration disturbed the tracery
of long, black fingers, skeletal streaks
of calligraphy against a scrim of sky.
No movement, but for the release
of the merest twig at limb's end,
falling tenderly to the earth,
nearly unnoticed.

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