

Carrion Cry

April summons a vulture flock
to our farm north of Goshen
for no particular reason,
unless it's the thawed fox
in the weeds by Whistle Creek
or some sin we can't name.
Like a throng of lost apostles
they perch in the peach trees
and preach a gospel so bleak
the ground is fouled slick.
The county agents apologize:
the bastards are sheltered
by federal law. Politicians,
buzzards—no difference to me.
There ought to be a bounty.
Hissing worse than bobcats,
they vomit and shit the yard
rancid. When the tabby flees
their roadkill reek, Delisa
won't open the drapes. "Bad
luck," she says and cuddles
her kitten. Their heads are
featherless to delve into death
and come up refreshed, sleek.
Sometimes in midday heat one
heretic opens his vast wingspan,
then smokes up to circuit ride

till his brotherhood follows,
their spirals shaping no wild
flower drifting down from Zion
but petals of a rogue-black rose
unfolding like a twisted word
spoiling over the orchard.