

85 1st

Pheasant in Crook, County Durham

i.m. my brother

The day I lunched with your daughter
my friend's cry shattered my dream.
I rushed to her bedroom thinking fall,
thinking pain, thinking far too much.

She pointed to the garden, the pheasant.
Took a while to focus, to find the white collar
stalking rose bushes, strange as a phantom
with FOMO, that jumped heaven for a day.

When I explained it was your special bird
she hugged me – saw a thread of belief.
Did it hear me call through double-glazing?
Did its ghostly head glance up at us?

The bird, so out of place, as you often were,
brushed past snowdrops, faded to leafy rust.
Before it left, I'm sure I heard it crow
enjoy your lunch, send her all my love.