

## A Corvidae Contest

Once again, a daily sport  
the blue jays run a relay on the wing:  
feeder  
tree  
feeder  
tree  
a race of greed  
a race to see who can gather up the peanuts  
that my mother scatters like Easter eggs every morning

But, as I watch, a new challenger  
a new name comes to interrupt the game  
my favorite competitor of them all

He lights down  
dark like a shadow, sleek like a fighter jet  
but no, not a fighter  
(not that I've seen yet)  
a coward most days, in fact  
but today— just hungry

The jays whiz past  
they whine from the trees  
once wheedling for more peanuts  
now warning the newcomer who eyes their prize

He takes it all in, stately like a statue  
not shaken by his distant cousins' empty jeering  
and in timely fashion flicks his wings, content with his descent  
and waddles  
bumbles, stumbles around on the uneven grass  
like a debutant's first time in stilettos  
making a round about the feeder  
a wide berth  
needing to get a grasp on the stakes before making his play

There on the ground, fumbled by someone  
one large and lonely peanut  
lost in the race of the relay on the wing  
the jays move too fast to see it  
but his eyes are keen  
keen to see the nut, the jays  
(me, behind the window's screen)  
a clever strategist  
or a coward weighing his odds  
it's all the same

No contest from the jays  
(and certainly not from me)  
he knows  
goes forward with that waddling strut  
picks up the nut  
watches his cousins and me, the spectators  
and gives another flick of the wing—  
too humble a crow to be crowing over his victory  
yet still pleased with his performance—  
and takes off to interrupt someone else's backyard contest

Only a moment passes before the race resumes  
a brief admiration  
before the jays return to their relay on the wing  
and I return to my busy morning  
reminded to pause for breakfast  
and the little things I often miss by racing too fast.