

SACHIKO MURAKAMI

NEARING WINTER

Having lost interest in the changing of seasons
Having lost the ability to dance through verb
Having seen blackbirds and having little to say about them
Having fewer than fourteen lines inside me
Having the call of black birds ringing in my ear
Having lost perspective on the line break
Having handed over the image of blackbird to science
Having heard little and spoken much less
Having the curtains finally hung, left them closed
Having light come through of its own accord
Having sharp autumnal light
Having little interest in it beyond a spark that sputters
Having knotted blackbird's tongue to mine
Having lost interest in the changing of seasons

CROW

I threw out that poem about the crows and the industrial park.
I was wrong about crows. They aren't metaphors for anything.
It's not just their multiplicity that's scary, though
I just wrote crow to contain the flock. Maybe Hitchcock
was reading du Maurier in bed with a handkerchief
tucked into his undershirt to catch crumbs
when he felt his fear too. In fact, he was wearing a crow suit.
He was flapping around madly trying to get into the mind of a crow
so the crows in his mind would vacate. He shot crows
and then held funerals his dinner guests were obliged to attend.
He carried a black quill to sign cheques. When he sat
for a self-portrait, a crow was drawn. No, that's not it.
I drove around at sunset in an industrial park where all the city's
Hitchcocks had come to roost. A murder
of Hitchcocks flapped their handkerchiefs and threw
breadcrumbs at me. I hit the gas and drove back to town
not because I was scared but because the sun was falling
fast and it was shiny.

BOOM CRASH BOOM CRASH

Sink beyond commerce to silty grit
and not enough history,
too much granite.
Let the realtors call, and call.
Crows in the industrial park—
mean faces, just birds.
Long before the realtors left
they were calling.
That sound? Crash. Crash. Just the waves,
still. It's a mass of water, neither housed
nor homeless.
Stand up. Change slips
through your fingers. Pebbles
in your pockets. Call me back. Keep walking.

Sachiko Murakami's first collection of poems, *The Invisibility Exhibit* (Talonbooks 2008), was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award and the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. She holds an MA in English Literature and Creative Writing from Concordia University. New poems can be found in print at *West Coast Line* and online at *Forget*. She has worked for *Matrix*, *Room*, *Event* and *The Capilano Review*, and is a past member of Vancouver's Kootenay School of Writing collective. Recently moved from Vancouver, she now lives in Toronto.