Vision in Which the Final Blackbird Disappears

By Phillip B. Williams

A monstrosity in the alley.  
A many-bodied movement grouped  
for terror, their flights’ brief shadows  
on the kitchen curtains, on the street’s  
reliquaries of loose squares and hustle.  
Some minds are groomed for defiance. The youngest  
calls out his territory with muscular vowels  
where street light spills peculiar, his hand  
a chorus of heat and recoil. “Could have been  
a doctor” say those who knew and did not  
know him, though he never wanted to know  
what gargles endlessly in a body — wet hives,  
planets unspooled from their throbbing shapes.  
There are many ways to look at this.  
He got what he wished against. He got  
wings on his shoes for a sacrifice. The postulate  
that stars turn a blind eye to the cobalt corners  
of rooms is incorrect. Light only helps or ruins sight.  
Daylight does cruel things to a boy’s face.

Source: Poetry (February 2016)