

Stewart Hickman

CONQUEROR BIRD

Here is how one gains a quiet place to roll one's mind.
Caught among the doing ones and the being ones
have we flown sufficiently enough to find our soul's center?
Who is quiet enough to see this,
and being quiet, still light enough to live life in the open?
The bay. This is the place where seagone
boats touch horizon, showing in their
spiky tops, how the merest bristle of mast
can limit such a looming thing, the line where sky and water
look touching, as long as the eye is wide.
These to and fro boats:
hums on the gray morning
in the margins of the day, the scribbles of motors
faintly proclaiming the doing of life.
Whatever the tangents of their courses—
wave glint, heron call, the unseen sweep of wind—
There is no herald of effort save the all but imperceptible
slowness of their returning home.
So many paths across vast wideness;
so few to port.
I have taken one, but with my eye,
turning back from sea toward seaside,
abandoning that dot of destiny I saw
just west of the merest shimmer of land, and east
of what could be as little as a tug's wake,
and as much as a tide's tug:
What is either's doing
compared to a single lone
bird's eye trawling the line of sea-sky?
The conqueror bird and
his glorious choice: confines of pond to mimic mind
here; there the bay, the world, the other side of pine.