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Belongings

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Belongings

by Edward Locke

I don't know how to come to terms
With this bird's death.
The manner, cause, impertinent —
The swallow lies beneath
Bold silver maple leaves, confined
With shine enough
For any trill that dulls its owner,

For iridescent fluff
That flunks live wit and irony:
Wingless with worms.

How swallows view my limbs or ears,
I plead ignorance.
They may, as I hike near their flights
Toward barns, thumb beaks at chance
And perch within my space—people
Show less than wind
Or rafters, figuring what counts;

No swallows would rescind
My death (if fit to intervene)
As I would theirs

Unless a choice arose—my good
In opposition
To creatures. Even should I find
An altruistic vision,
I'm stuck, I'd still at the fork's tale
Sprinkle my species
With preference, walk human-centered.

Yet, given profound reaches,
Would birds save us, but first all birds?
Who thinks they would?

