

Glioblastoma

By Carrie Gilman

The birds are dying.

We look at one another, uncertain
this is what he meant to say.

I look out the window expectant,
watch for a flicker perishing,
a swallow coming to its end.

The birds are dying, he says
again. Now we are certain
of the word, *Dying*.

*Have there been fewer birds
around?* she asks, assessing
whether his statement is fact
or a mere confluence of words.

He leans back in his chair
folds his hands neatly in his lap.

I imagine he has held this posture
a thousand times before.

Oh, I hadn't really noticed, he says.

The room stills. Then, silence takes flight,
past the row of apple trees, into
the evening air, murmuration changing shape.

We return to discussions of practical things,
easily understood, words without wings.

Carrie Gilman is a licensed clinical social worker who has worked in the medical field for over 15 years, primarily in settings serving individuals and families coping with chronic, serious, and end of life illnesses. In that time, Carrie's love of reading and writing poetry has significantly overlapped with the experience of witnessing the way in which individuals and families face illness. Carrie resides in Denver, CO with her husband and daughter.

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