

PATRICK GORDON

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## Full Bird in Flight

Before the dawnbird dreams out loud  
I am at least half awake.  
The light bends around corners quietly,  
silently, but dawnbird knows  
anyway and warns us all.  
It is a feathered prophet that cries, "Arise.  
It's here. Advance."  
Movement is life.

You can see the Alvin Ailey  
Dance Company first breakdancing  
as teenagers on a corner, coiling springs  
on stage, loving the arch of spines.  
Their legs can bear great weight; their knees propel.  
Umbrellas Up! High steppin'  
with the congregation on Sunday  
in a line in slow mo'. A sacred circle.  
What revelation!

The light murmurs its explanation  
of the contour of things:  
the sand ridges of rumpled covers  
on my bed at dawn; a noise near Syrian border—  
I resist the urge to roll away.  
Light advances on the day.

All movement is holy. The child's  
carousel ride after school is no less  
joyful than the stallion's race is,  
or the sudden pivot of starlings in autumn air.  
Nor the pummel of early spring rain  
upon the earth, drops that open it,  
and spread it like liquid fingers  
seeding the grass between nearby saplings.  
Nor is the sudden splay of flamenco  
finger-fan across her face. All are holy.

The light drizzles behind me between slatted  
Venetian blinds but I can see a boy  
jogging the Vermont hills behind my home ...  
then running an op from chopper in Mosul.  
The explosion under me sounded  
muffled like popcorn burst in microwave.  
Everywhere I go now I ride, not walk.

Last week I dreamed my buddies broke  
some roof tiles to make an opening  
and lowered my cot with two olive tow straps,  
easy, as though they might do further damage  
to my back. Even this simple  
aerial maneuver was satisfying,  
both a parachute jump and burial.

There Jesus sits teaching a crowd.  
"You too, Master, were a casualty  
of politics and religious warfare.  
Make me walk; let me kneel again,"  
I say.  
"*You will walk again with me,*" he says...  
Hooah! my buddies shout.  
"*...walk once more in Paradise.*"  
Oh, I only  
hope.

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**PATRICK GORDON** served stateside in the NJARNG during Vietnam as a medic. He developed a career as a clinical social worker, specializing in PTSD, and defines himself as a religious poet.