

Voice-over

Susan Stewart

*undergrowth in creak, creak
guttural the quarreling squirrels*

a deckle-edged Spring, three

*hollow rata-rata-rata
wood-pecker
on the right,
on the left
(or echo)*

landscapes, thinking to sketch
them, concentrating

*a-rumph a-rumph the bullfrog
grown now singular*

close on particulars
that otherwise would not
exist. There is something

*where once the peepers
sang chaos, mounting, heet
heer heet heet heet heer*

inherently sentimental about
the idea,

*heet heer heet
just a month ago*

it's neither here nor there, but then
that's what it means

*wheelde wheelde wheelde wheelde
sweet sweet meetcha*

to draw your way
toward it—

*silent pair of finches
just ahead,
vanished gold*

the basin-deep skunk cabbage
leaves brim-full
of yesterday's rain

*and the hissing
geese, their wheezing breasts inflating*

the grasses wound
around and through them

*while their green infant,
phosphorescent-
fuzzed, scrambles*

sentimental, like a pressed
flower that will lose its color

*across the path. The smaller
the being, the more pronounced*

the plastic debris inert

the silence.

That's the difference—the draped
dirty tangle of torn
grocery bags.

*With an ear to the ground, even
beetles make a rumble*

Inertness, irreducible,
growth grown impossible—

*nattering
tattered spare-
narrating*

sparrows

the never of it.

caw-cawwah caw-cawwah caw-ca
caw-cawwah (the always,
mates for life)

and the effort to record
 came forward in all

hermit thrush
cascade
first flex, then
lushest
spilling

its own plasticity,

hoowheet weet weet weet weet
hoo weet weet weetweet weet

the life-like, plastic—taxidermic,
 pure arsenic

cheer cheer cheer cheer *cheer*

though words, in
 life, like
 life, are like
 water