

excerpt from *goose on a roof happens in the fog*
in *les Oiseaux Sauvages de Detroit* [SS page 1 of 2]

march 30 Early Birds: I remember

when a fire would always bring us

out to the sidewalk

in pajamas

before school, before work, before another pension day

of puttering in the garden or watching soap operas or going on the avenue

or waiting for the kids to come home from school

and transgress through one misstep

onto a perfect lawn.

I remember when a fire would always bring us out to the sidewalk in pajamas.

april 4: one falcon and no little birds

april 14: three GOLDFinches, chipping sparrow

april 16: brown thrasher, rufous-sided towhee

april 22: rock doves, of course

april 25: goose on a roof, red-winged blackbirds and grackles down by the river

april 26: downy woodpecker hammering its territory from conduit on a telephone pole

april 28: a flitter of chimney swifts over Cass

may 2: ruby-crowned kinglet—a small bird snatching insects or larvae from a small tree

may 7 Resident Species: He's building a railroad and the trains to ride on it

under the sour cherry tree

around his apartment buildings—

crossing the driveway,

clanging as railroad crossings do,

graded by day laborers from central America and eastern Europe.

The baby can ride it, he says,
as soon as she can sit up on her own.

But from the balcony I see
while testing the steam

and the bells

and the brakes

he rides it a little too.

He'll beat the light rail project on Woodward, he says,

and I believe him—

all the way to Pontiac, I believe him.

june 2: a hunch

a baseball cap

a box that says "Michigan Tomatoes"

for tools

a paint scraper

a door to a church

one hundred years old

a hand

nearly as old

june 8 instructions for walking on the streets of Detroit: Try to get to your destination without making 90-degree turns. Try diagonals through parking lots and weed meadow lots. Cross streets diagonally in large windows between cars. Watch out for the chicken bone.