

## Twelve Quail Passed by My Window Yesterday

Twelve quail passed by my window yesterday  
Seeking seeds, food from Nature's raw display.

One scratched around a budding daffodil  
And Cooper's Hawk stooped low to make the kill.

Head feathers drooped and eyelids quaking, merged.  
Its mate bewailed an antiphonal dirge.

Quail muscle-fibers plucked, cut up and shred  
Repurposed life on which blind nestlings fed.

Some English Sparrows, titmice one or two  
All died to keep hawks skied in striking blue.

Another quail passed by my window pane  
And talons pierced and feathers flew again.

But next year when once more I seek the quail  
Their breeding will outnumber hawks, not fail.

Each season quail surrender birds anew  
Lay eggs en masse and Cooper's Hawk but few.

Their lives so brief, in handsome plumage fine  
Both beauties lead much shorter lives than mine.

We glean from Nature lessons, sub-sublime  
Warriors rule this world and death counts climb.

Donald Shephard  
February 25, 2010

