

Nine Wild Turkeys

Ted Kooser

It seems there's been an intermission
back in the roadside brush, and this family,
wearing their iridescent formal clothes,
is the first to step out into the empty lobby
of the gravel road, the stately tom in the lead,
opening each foot as he sets it down
like a man releasing first one silver coin
from his fist and then a second, his wife
a few steps behind, carefully placing her feet
where his have been, fitting them into
his prints in the dust, and the young ones
bunched in the rear, nervously glancing
right and left, uncertain of what they're
supposed to be doing, shoving each other
as they scurry up out of the ditch, none
to be left behind. To see ourselves
in a family of turkeys is to see ourselves
as God must see us, stopping his truck,
the box heaped up with bags of seed
and manure, even shutting the engine off,
his elbow resting on the sill, all patience,
amused to watch us make our way across.

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