

## Red-winged Blackbird

These creatures of obsidian  
are visible only from the flames  
that coat their epaulettes.  
They border power lines like branches  
of the ghost, that was  
once a forest. But now I dwell,  
in land gouged and  
hardened with cement, metal,  
and dead groves.  
Here, the birds embody flies.

Parallel to my tracks, they court me  
beaks angled acutely onto my path.  
I pollute the line with my brilliant horn,  
hoping the blare will scare them to flee.  
“We will never perform a duet,  
I will always bellow on this stage.”  
They do not fly away, but  
spot the scene  
like spreading mold spores.  
They're often concealed,  
needing to be eradicated.

This land has succumbed  
to my steel:  
when I pass, trees buckle  
trunks twist and warp,  
scorning from the rails  
as if they began to flee—  
Remnants of what used to live,  
bare branches that survived my birth.  
Ancient sprigs of the past.  
Oh red-winged blackbird,  
your trills sound of cicadas;  
I wonder if you'll see the end of summer.  
As I scorch earth, it cries out  
no one seems to hear.

Small bird,  
you cannot overcome.  
I crave the day you cease  
this courtship,  
I long for your silence.  
A union will not fix  
what was destroyed.  
You will be consumed,

your nests shaken from the sky  
and trampled—

Until you become a blackbird.  
Until you extinguish.