

MAUREEN HYNES

Black, Brown, White and Grey

Like a four-paneled Japanese screen, the plate glass window
frames the bare brown soil of a November yard,
the dull grey sky and the silvered wooden fence in between.
Black squirrels scurry across the fence's ledge; sparrows
land, take off from the skiff of snow on the ground.
Shreds of snow streak the forks and crevices
of the overhanging maple branches. At every knock of the wind,
oiled sunflower seeds pour out of the feeder
and the birds flit down, up, down to peck at them—
a flurrying disorder and a chaos of feeding that goes on for hours. Or
hours it seems in the meeting house until the sparrows
come to seem both my thoughts and my inability to shush them,
soothe them. Remembering this troubled friend, this dead poet,
who used her poems to dig and analyze and press
charges, sometimes to extol but often to mourn; trying
to see the ground beneath the birds: cluttered,
tracked upon, covered and exposed.