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# Saturday

Brooks Haxton

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# *Saturday*

BROOKS HAXTON

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By sunrise all the birds already in full swing flew, sang,  
walked on the lawn, more brilliant, freer than a boy  
could even wish. Watching them from his window,  
wanting that lightness in his bones, that swiftness,  
that high music in his voice, he flapped his arms  
and sweveled his quick head, but it was a boy inside.  
His mother wanted him to be a big boy now. He left his room.  
But in the kitchen, chairs stood brooding around an empty table.  
The stock-stillness of a cornflakes box inside the cupboard  
worried him, and no one helped when the refrigerator door  
sucked open, and the morgue light came on, and cold air  
poured down his anklebones onto his unprotected feet. First,  
Mama had said: no noise till after coffee. Then: no more  
climbing into her bed and whispering to her in her sleep.  
And finally: no more Indian-walking through her room at dawn  
to lean over her face (the only ever, only only face) and breathe,  
and wait, and breathe her breath, and wait, until she woke.  
Still, it was as if an undertow that pulled his feet now  
stopped them, toes to the crack under his parents' door.  
His father's breathing sounded from inside. He saw, eyelevel  
in the knob, a dark troll daring him to pass: it was his own  
face. And he took it in both hands, and held very still.