

The Blackbird

i.m. Francis Ledwidge

Fair-haired Ellie shared
with me her sacred memory
of you, and your story

and the twinning
of you both
for only a short time

before she left you
for another; and you left –
heartbroken – for The Front.

You recorded your presence
there, in a palm-sized mud-
and-blood-stained notepad;

timeless words, in pencil,
recovered from a pocket.

I feel your essence
in the painful perfection
of her regret
as I am flooded
by a plaintive music.

I hope you too can hear
it; that you now can rest
lighter – as a feather –
within velvety dark wings
contingent to her being.

At the tip of my pen
let your beak break
the surface tension
of this awkward silence.

Let your voice
find a way to stage a bleed
and slowly seep
not far from my blunt nib.

Let a *nom de plume*
– without a name –
infuse into the fibre
of my blank page
and coagulate
as love-loud verse

in the guise of a dark
ink-blotted blackbird.

John D. Kelly