

Clay into birds

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [June 16, 2021](#) issue

for Obi Martin

Mammoth mammon-caged gatherings
are happening elsewhere. But we are here,
where we can be counseled to lean toward
whatsoever things are funny, small, astonishing,
oblique. Once the alphabet was magic,
once the leaves spoke a language
the wise heard behind their eyes.

Once a strange hand fisted clay into birds,
and images slipped from one mind to another
like breath, like wind, like electrons
slipping inside the airy hearts of protons
and out again, shaking out their fur.

Once there was twice as much time,
time enough for singing and hunting,
time for the rough mysticism of
a well-used broom, a pitchfork,
and trysts in the secret grottos too.

And then there was nothing but rain,
nothing but desire for a well-lit room
and creatures resembling ourselves.

We can never hear what others mean,
exactly, and yet we go on, daily
launching sounds into the distances
like spider silk, like swaying bridges,
like the word that is always a gift,
always magical yet not magic,
patient as the foggy membranes

that will someday be a star.