

The professor pauses mid-lecture

by [Benjamin Myers](#) in the [November 22, 2017](#) issue

Each word's a pickled egg, the lecture  
a grimy jar. Outside everything  
blossoms funky & hot  
like landscape done by Prince  
  (the sun hands out yellow lollipops)  
& students keep their eyes

crawling like houseflies on the window glass.  
By one & two they start to nod & startle,  
nod & startle until  
the whole backrow looks like a horn section  
grooving in sync. The clock, too, falls asleep  
& slides off the wall.

My lectern slits its wrists & falls—I have to go  
impromptu. But look! One student taking notes!  
A miniscule, curling script  
that when I'm close enough to see turns out  
to be tiny doodled birds: a thousand gray flitting swallows  
in swirling liftoff. Even I bid her fly.