

Mid-October

by [Charles Hughes](#) in the [October 2022](#) issue

Birds flying too high for me to see what birds.
Crows, if I had to guess, five or six crows,
All rising higher, higher, only to fall
A little way, then rise again, compose
The sky, calm now, near empty, natural.

No consolation waits within this calm
For grief at having lost a child, grief friends
Have come to know firsthand and call despair.
No beauty of quiet skies can make amends—
The loss is more than emptiness can bear.

The birds have gone. I watch. They don't return.
I'm clearing flowers from our balcony,
Mostly begonias, which are mostly spent,
Pinks pink but not as they were born to be,
Whitening, shrinking, stillest sacrament.