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
blooms 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.