

## 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.