

I was awake for three reasons.

One: you live near a Tube stop and it was firing up for the first journey of the day. Two: there's a bird in the tree outside your window and it was shouting at your house. I don't know what kind of bird it was, nor the type of tree. Thirdly: you had trapped a bee in a glass last night and forgotten to let it out. The intention was clearly there, to transport it down the stairs or tip it out of the window, and you had slid a postcard of Vienna or St. Petersburg or that sort of place beneath the tumbler in readiness. It was not actually a tumbler at all but a washed-out jar of Nutella and the bee was drunk on a whole night's worth of staring at the sights of Vienna or St. Petersburg and the city's ghosts of hazelnuts

and sugar, *dink-d' dink-dinking* its head against a transparent wall on your bedside table. Trapped beneath your arm, I blinked at the bee. Bees can see in UV light so we must have looked like a ridiculous disco last night. It headbanged an answer to this thought, eyes all honeycombed and asterisk-star-kaleidoscopic while outside the bird shouted a little louder.

I'm sure there is an identification app that allows you to run through an index of birds' toccatas and scherzos and bugled blurts. As you thumb down the list, little facts about birds might run in a scrolling marquee along the bottom of your screen. *The bones of a pigeon weigh less than its feathers*, that kind of thing. Starlings only exist in America because a man wanted to introduce all the birds mentioned in Shakespeare's plays to the continent. The organ in a bird's throat that allows it to sing is called a *syrix*—I test this word now between my teeth and feel it is far sprightlier and more lovely a word than *larynx*. This was a good call on the anatomists' part. You stir as I say *larynx* aloud and turn a little, causing crowfeet folds in your pillow around your head. Sleepily, I wonder whether there could be an equivalent app for identifying bees by their song before remembering that they do not sing. Not for us, anyway. They dance. I make a note to look up bee facts later in the day for balance's sake.

Just yesterday I read a study that found older honeybees effectively reverse brain-aging when they take on those nest responsibilities that are typically handled by much younger bees. *Beebrain*, I say softly out loud, and the crowfeet of your pillow deepen imperceptibly.

I always thought that birdsong was supposed to be lovely but here was this blackbird-slash-thrush-slash-starling-slash-finch going full alarm-alarum crazy. I can't believe you stirred at *larynx* and *beebrain* but can sleep right through this going on outside your window.

Maybe the unseen bird had carved BIRD 4 BEE 4EVA with its beak on the tree trunk outside in a big old notch-heart. Or perhaps it was shouting the passerine equivalent of *OI, MATE, ARE YOU LOOKING AT MY BEE?* and the bee is performing a mournful balloné and brisé on a Venetian or Peterburgian balcony while I'm tangled up here caught in the euphemisms and innuendos of the shadows of a pillow, only half-awake and thinking that I should leave. The bird and the bee could set up, I think, a lovely B&B and serve their guests toast with honey and eggs.

Who am I to keep them apart? I thought.

A bee in the hand worth two in the bonnet, I think, and I pick up the glass and stumble to the window that is not mine and NOW! the window is OPEN! and the glass

is OVERTURNED! and the bee has flown out by my ear
and become a comma in the air, and the blackbird-slash-
thrush-slash-starling-slash-finch joined it in the air, and the
commuters at the station beneath your window applauded
the bee and the bird and the considerate naked woman
with her arms flung out framed in the window above
their platform, as if this was an opera, and then the same
commuters stepped into their train and the curved glass of
the carriage doors shut behind them, and

all of this is a half-asleep thought of a euphemism of a
metaphor of a ghost of the word for the sight of you opening
an eye and saying 'Good morning', and that the thought of
you as a bird, or as a bee, might always be worth waking to.