

Dropped Aitches

Owl dishes a plate of vowels
cool as cucumber slices
in the rune-twiggled wood.

Prone in our moon-blue room
we tune into its doppel-
ganger hunched on a far branch

digesting old news.
Solemn converse ensues -
of flight and of killing

under night's flung cloaks
of half-dark and moonlight –
exchanged in sharp ooo-ooos.

Apart but together –
in our moon-blue room – we
bandy love in the joined-up language

of quills. Dark, inked-in trees
un-hood their hawks – oh God
the struck heart's howl is mute

as a mouse's, as doves' feathers bouncing
in fountains, as owls' dropped aitches
crash-landing in the woods.

Ian Crockatt