

Connie Barber

THE BIRDS

Like last year, an English thrush singing
morning and evening. Spring visitors
arrive after winter ravens: greenies
skip through the lemon tree; wattle birds
sample succulents' bells; in the elm
lorikeets' quiet conversations among
its flowers; a blackbird excavates the garden,
hunting, flicks away protective wire,
tears into open soil; last year their larder
for nestlings fledging.

Greenies' flames slip, flitter and call
for enough days to clean every twig and bud and they
have gone. I will harvest a crop of lemons and wish
for swift green flames to nest again high in the creeper.
Cats know the way there now. The brown bird has arrived.
She explores scattered mulch and broken earth. Her mate
sings blackbird territory. The greenies

have left the garden until next spring. The brown bird
builds again. Ravens swoop and circle away
above the elm; the lorikeets are somewhere else.

