

JOHN BLIGHT

THE MUSCOVY DUCK

The white duck came to us, flying
we deduced, into our garden
at night, or when our attentions
were diverted: which must seem much
of time to our garden (or does
our absence mean nothing there?)
No message, note of ownership
under the duck's white wings. So we
became friends, offering it plates
of mash; and, with the far-seeing
eyes of a duck, it possessed us.

How do you put off a friend out
of nowhere? We couldn't describe
this as a lost bird. Have there
ever been such fallen avian
souls, other than fledglings found sprawled
from unguarded nests in the eaves?

To name it was our necessity;
but that name flew away with it
after months of companionable
acquaintance: at which point of our
friendship we felt let down by
the sky which returned our gaze of
loss and self-questioning, with a
blaise blue stare of nothing more
to say about departures, but
some deference to a duck's death;
for it may have glimpsed that end in
our eyes beyond the proffered plates
of bran.

What did we eat? Duck? We
had no such ideas on this
tourist; but all ducks look beyond
ideas. Try to stalk ducks on
a wide waste of water! They are
more cautious than seagulls with the
gulls' boundaries set at a half
beach's latitude of escape.

Just
as we've proved, unsafe friends (for
we are raconteurs) may be
the duck was wise to take flight from
people who spoke in one's absence.