

SILVANA GARDNER

NIGHTHAWK

Its beak
must be an indestructible chalk
screeching strident syllables
on a blackboard sky.

Goose-flesh under blankets
recoils at the sound
and, night-blind, I peer
for the talons, to see
how they brittle the hard darkness
as far as the Dog Star.

I raise the billhook of one thought
to the ruth of a full moon:
where is the bird that knows
how to scratch the night
till it speaks
and what classroom is this,
that I bury my head in the pillow?

ALEXANDRA SEDDON

FOR N : THE ORDINARY POEM
(a postscript to the *Formulae*)

you sitting listening in the bath
("no softness or beauty in your poetry")
and so I begin to hanker for the
BEAUTIFUL WORD
again swimming on its own
and there must be a way back
to the ordinary poem
(without sinking in cliché)
no longer with ease of course
those drunken fireworks

but now I am the puritan
or try to be
if there's a hell I'll
drown in sentiment