

The Fossil-Box

For Jacob and Jozef Olivey

They planted the perfect ammonite
among the rocks for the boys – loose

change from the fossil shop –
the guide's human eyes playing

along. It was enough to keep
the hunt going, that chiselled

afternoon. At home, the deposit-
box lies open on the table.

We pick through permineral
treasures for the impressions small

lives leave on hard objects. In one
split core of ripe stone, a maggot

of lucent crystal, coiled, or un-
coiling, its universe an inverse ratio.

Sound and Motion

After Keats

1. Afternoon

The birds are incessantly
on the move this blue
afternoon and children tramp-

online into trees planted
for an orchard. Out front
the big black dog lopes

after a ball; these assembled
intervals, the sine waves
of joy. She calls, grass-

hoppers stridulating
warning ahead
of my scissoring feet.

2. Apple Tree

In autumn, I will move
this apple. Now I sit
in the mask of its leaves

to learn to feel the blue
and cloudless stars vagueing
the sky. A squanderer

in slow time, I over-
hear the garden sink
into its lobes and lap-

pets. There is sympathy
here the birds communicate
like a tannoy of hearts,

a fondness exhaled
as scent, turning
through the ground.

I have planted my feet,
attuned my ears to the in-
finite whirr of wheels.

3. Evening Bird

You follow invisible
wavelengths into
that intangible space

between evening and sky,
bird I cannot name,
appearing to me first

as a shape and adding
time across a breath-
less quadrant of air.

With a tree that has expressed
apples, I listen to your reck-
less song, untranslatable,

saying all and anything;
while you braille the earth
as air under wings.

Crystals

A new procedure of snow
cuddles the world; open
form its granular beauty.

I step out into the hoar
frost and capped columns,
rubbing poles of haw-

thorn rimed between the inch
and finger, mull the drift
of air, gradually under-

standing the chilly magnitude.
I pull my jacket close, and
possibly the snow stops.