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Starlings

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Have you ever seated on a bench in a park when the weather is good, not great yet not terrible, when green water in a pond and the sound around are being still and only birds dare to disturb them, when sunbeams are lukewarm if they peek from ajar clouds, and when nothing bothers you and you bother nothing, when no people are passing by and every thought is old yet new, when it's only sessile you and, suddenly, spry and shiny starlings troop around?

Their flock flew from nowhere besieging the bench, rattling and trilling, making the air vibrate. They are black at the distance but glossy purple and green within touch. They swaggered and ruffled jumping around, chattering, chirping and whistling. I thought for a second of a similar sound: maybe a laser gun, maybe a string being pulled, perhaps, something rather extraterrestrial. They were flouncing, what for? For mating or food? Asking to play, gently stomping the ground? They are smart, as I heard, they can mimic a sound. Mozart kept one as a pet which he got from a store where this starling for him sang his *Piano Concerto*, just one tune, but the bird changed one G into G# which was funny and charmed the maestro. When the bird passed away, the obsequy was arranged, where everyone warbled a requiem.

Thus I wandered through my consciousness stream, and the question arose, how do birds enjoy their existence? Not just starlings, but all, either parakeets or... maybe owls, sparrows, eagles or swans, maybe penguins or ostriches. The latter two, though, can barely fly and perhaps just like us, often dream of the sky, but for those, the well-winged, do they fancy strong wind, do they wait for a breeze, do they value the sense of the freedom up there, when the world turns a trifle, mere miniature, perpetual, humble and round? Spread your triangle wings, flap a few times, and you are free to go in any direction. Nothing stops, nothing bothers you gliding your way, well, apart from a predator, or a plane, or a drone, or a hunter's long rifle, which can just with one finger snap end your existence.

But, discarding the death, we all know we've been jealous all time, from the very first day humans noticed a bird and desired to share the freedom. We started with jumping, it was stupid, indeed, but at least it gave us a glimpse of flying. It bent countless smart minds, broke a graveful of bones, we invented fake wings, gliders and parachutes, but we don't have control over airy flows, still, what we can is just fall a bit slower. For the birds who can fly it's routinely mundane, just like walking for us, jealous humans.

"Do you like flying, mate?" I asked one of the birds. The starling didn't seem interested. It stared at me, slowly tilting its head and ruffling its feathers.

"Of course, you do", I whispered and added, "You don't have a choice".

I sighed and got up, strolled away from the bench. I felt dusk was approaching or, maybe, just the clouds above were less ajar.

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