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Looking in Both Directions

Lois Ann Carrier

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Looking in Both Directions

In the hush of early morning a young grackle
hunches in the lush grass. Alarmed by my coming
he makes an expensive effort to move. One leg
gives way. His body lists like a disabled ship
that has made it into a calm bay. The bright eyes
ringed with yellow lose the struggle to stay open.
Now he is on his back, his articulate feet still
in the still air, his breast rising and falling evenly,
rapidly, until he comes to his last exhalation.
On his shoulders feathers the color of gentians
glisten in the cool rich shade. I lift him gently
on the tip of my shovel and bury him between
two of my favorite roses. Wind chimes repeat
their glassy arpeggios, nonchalant as falling water.

I let the future flow before me:
 dissolution
 into basic particles
 induction
into a gloaming helix of molecules
 spinning off forms
far beyond our bird's-eye vision.

—*Lois Ann Carrier*