

My ma tells me:

'Don't fly with the crows, and you won't get shot'

I listen. I stay indoors.

When it's quiet I can hear their cawing on the street

The frog legs rattling in their stomachs

I wonder how it feels to have hollow bones.

Mine feel heavy.

I wonder how it feels to drain oil black into the night.

To be a civilian, in times like these-
is the stupidest choice you could make.

It's the last thing I'd tolerate my son to be,
besides the obvious.

The words that follow civilian, you know them.

They are nobody's kin.

My bullet streaks slick across the sky-
Knocks the milk bottle from their mothers hand.

The shine from out her eye,
a little shiny milk isn't much to pay.

I have a gun to train.

When my son bears it-
it will know the cleanest way to kill.

Crows, Ravens, Blackbirds

No matter, all are good meat.

In the waiting room BBC news is playing

And the wee girl asks her daddy what a petrol bomb is.

I taste fumes in the back of my throat.
When I'm called, I'll answer, I'll ignite.
She will have more questions.
Why do people who sound like me
kill people who sound like me?
He is answering her.
She has not been taught not to ask.
My granny told my dad to sell pane glass.
It was a lucrative choice.
We grew up fat enough to resist the crow beckon
The coin shining in its beak.

Now, many among us have
Tucked the gnarled and knuckled feet away
Into thick socks and heavy boots
My daughter plucks the quills from behind my neck
Before they sprout.
All that's left is in the black of the eye
I see others often, meet eyes, flash, look away.
Once in a while, I hear those less discreet than I
Speak the old language.
Cowed caws and rattles remind me that
When the feathers are ruffled
Our murder is still here.

