

# DUEL

*Lee Slonimsky*

Crimson droplets fading in the snow  
suggest some raptor's rendezvous with prey;  
circling perhaps, then spying fur below,  
a dive-vector toward quick demise, a day  
or two before. Trajectory comes easy  
to redtails raised on wind's geometry:  
downward plummet, taloned stab, aloft  
to feast then at a lofty perch.

Hawk-craft  
of sight and sever is implacable,  
a judgment rendered suddenly, final  
as any nature has to offer. Yet, somehow,  
this frail scatter of droplets seems cruel,  
unfair on its face, a winged lopsided duel  
of arrow, flower. No-one, though's, to blame:

a creature scurried, then a raptor came.

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