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## The Rock Doves of Istanbul

Michael Cadnum

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## Cadnum: The Rock Doves of Istanbul

### THE ROCK DOVES OF ISTANBUL

Michael Cadnum

Soldiers with machine guns and green helmets  
stood in front of the bank. He had to ignore  
the *taksis* that beeped at him as he paused  
outside the agreed-upon tea garden, the trees  
painted white up to where their dark branches spread.  
She was there already, waiting.  
The small drinking glasses rattled in red and white saucers,  
and there was a plate of sugar cubes, and the shovel repairman  
beyond the garden gate crouching,  
his hammer peeling against the bent and  
broken blades. Too much  
to name and gather, the traveler  
a shadow in a chorus of color. If he had to  
pack it all into the decreed hull, two and by two,  
flood promised and beginning to shiver down from on high,  
would he remember the pigeon, or would  
the pigeon even count as a creature—  
ash-blue fowls the boys were catching, one after the other,  
the same bird endlessly replicated. There'd be no problem  
remembering the hawk skimming the street,  
or the sharp-note hammer,  
as though the tool were alive—  
and who was to say the shovel and the hat the tool  
repairman was wearing were not creatures, too?  
So what to save and what to let drink darkness?

As though he had to choose the words  
that he would endow with survival, letting others disappear,  
and he couldn't. He would always gather  
the wrong expressions, and miss the syllables

he would actually turn out to need: the *hmm*?  
when he thought she had said something,  
the cube of sugar already dissolving into joy.