Three Ways to Look at the Balkans and not a Blackbird Among Them

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Forgetting is like so many birds
that gather in huge flocks:
dark shades, small, unfeathered
and gone without individuation.

Some birds are not for forgetting.
They lift off on wings heavy
with memory, ravenous harpies
disregarded at great risk.

1. an English Sparrow, thick beaked
   banged on the bathroom window.
   Peck, thpt, bang against glass
   of unlikely resilience.
   Peck, thpt, bang its dawn call
   Blagoevgrad, Melnik, Sandanski

2. a dovecote looked down on me
   boiling water, killing bacteria.
   Brown flaked panes a perch
   for the black, white, grey Doves
   silent before their open cote
   in the coal smoke of Bulgaria.

3. two Peacocks in an olive grove,
   Argos alerted, take abrupt flight
   just beyond Athena's ruins
   whose temple archway still stands
   open to the encircling Aegean.
   This Greek island is Balkan, too.

There was another, nameless bird.
It flew into my friend's window.
I do not know if it died.
Maybe it was only stunned
flying from Macedonia to Macedonia
and still suffering in the Balkans.