

CROWS

Conor McDonough, O.P.

OGATA KŌRIN - CROWS AND MOON

I. CASHEL

Dominicans
lived here once –
now crows
in every nesting grike
and crumbling lavabo.

When we line up to sing,
the birds, from all their hiding places,
laugh, scatter, wheel black on the empty sky
and re-assemble.

On the tower they make their choir:

*We chaptered once, like you,
but now we murder.*

*When you've worn the feather as long as us,
they say
then you'll understand.*

II. LIMERICK

Outside in the bright
decaying garden,
a crow bursts the pool
of stagnant water.

Its beak intent
under wing and
feathers splayed.

Scurry to the edge,
slick wings flap out
and up and leave
in the run-off
a flash of light,
big dirty drops of water,
wonderfully held.

Conor McDonough joined the Order of Preachers in the Irish Province in 2009.