

LOCKBOXES OF THOUGHT

PETER MAKUCK

Coastal Java Shack

I decide to clock out,
stop at this waterfront bistro
I've driven past dozens of times,
carry a steaming dark roast
to the window,

"Chronic Blues"
on the house speakers,
Coltrane
keeping me
from the lockbox of thought.

I sink into the soft swallow
of an armchair
at the edge of a room
quiet with people
staring at laptops,

and stare at a sailboat
on its low-tide side
but what makes me focus
are two pigeons
that land on the dock planks
a few feet away—
flying rats,
or shit birds,
some people call them,
but a bird
that can roll a 360
To escape the plunge
of a peregrine.

With every step,
they cock their heads,
better to see.
Pinkish red feet,
orange eyes
with a black dot at the center,
their necks
a shiny iridescence.

In bird books
they're "rock doves,"
and I'm seeing
the two homers,
Penny and Phil,
I kept as a kid
in a loft atop our garage.

I released them once
at my grandfather's farm.
They circled, then flew
the twenty-five miles,
making it home
before we did
in my father's new Ford.

I'm there and here
at the same time,
clocked out,
just watching the pigeons.

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