

Carolyn Adams

Winter Hawk

In winter, the train runs
every half-hour. It's 25 degrees.
The snow says
it will take longer than that.
The old man behind me at the shelter
shuffles the garbage, sings
about cigarettes and canned ham.
He's got the smokes,
but he could use the ham.
His voice isn't bad.
I remember I'm a woman.

A young man walks up,
tosses worn textbooks on the bench,
eyes me, walks a few feet
away to smoke. I guess
he's being considerate.
He looks at me. I glance at him
for a moment.
His vape steam billows.
The solitary space around me
thickens. I jam my hands deeper
into my inadequate coat.

Two men in hoodies,
loose-limbed, careless talkers,
pick up the books, leaf through them.
I don't make eye contact.
Their talk is loud in the encompassing air.
I used to know why it's so quiet
when it's cold. I've forgotten.

The young man returns, the two men ask
if he's homeless. He shrugs.

The singing man takes on
a different key. One of the two
loose men yawns, says he slept
all day yesterday. The young man
mumbles something I can't hear.
I'm pretending not to notice, but
obliquely, I'm eyeing all of them.

A hawk glides above,
alone, wary
in the winter cold.

Carolyn Adams' poetry and art have appeared in *Steam Ticket*, *Cimarron Review*, *Dissident Voice* and *Blueline Magazine*, among others. Having authored four chapbooks, her full-length volume is forthcoming from Fernwood Press. She has been twice nominated for both Best of the Net and a Pushcart prize.