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Cockfight

James Papworth

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Carrie Sandholtz

James Papworth

COCKFIGHT

Each night at dusk
eyes of birds engage
and in that dancing, feathers flare
wings beat back days,
dust drops from air
its gold and yellow skin decayed.
Taut talons scratch dirt
as vultures make their turns,
and wrinkled hands make ready
dirt-filled urns.

LITTORAL

We wait on cheap beach chairs,
wise to why the sand is flat,
fat with the jellyfish.
Our children chase the waves beyond the bar,

bright-chassied, tumbling in the foam;
sunlight flashes on their backs.
Their calls are weak beneath the roar,
dull as the noise of gulls.

The waves will push them back,
flatten their castles,
bring the foam boarders to our feet,
shivering and kipper-fingered.

They'll learn to lose the chase,
calculate the intervals,
let the waves efface, and wait
till winter duns their ruddy countenance.