

To the Common Woodpigeon

PETER FREEMAN

*you stooopid pigeon you stooopid pigeon
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Culfer, woody, ring dove, quist, cushy-doo
it's you I look to midsummer
the clatter of your fumbings in the sycamore
your 'hope for the best' thwack, lift, stall,
crack of the whip wing clap, glide, fall
into stiff-limbed wheezy flight as if
it's too much now that you've escaped
the twelve bore and the country pub menu.

No wonder you come back every year
to this bunch of sticks in the laburnum.
Not a bad life pottering about the garden
nodding like you're looking for the kernel
of something, plonking yourself in the bird bath
to tease the neighbour's cats at the risk
of a feather or two.

Seed-grinder, leaf-shredder, water-snorter
milk-maker, loyal, gentle bird, I can't tell
who is who so it's the two of you
I listen to, the little of your wild
in my humdrum suburban, your five note song
a cool breeze on a hot afternoon
translated by my children who sang it back
to you long ago in another country.



Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Rosemary Winnall