

Mistle Thrush

PETER FREEMAN

A track through fog into a shadowless wood
where water drips from twigs
and flushes gurgle out of the bog
across the dismantled railway.

Mile after mile of rain
and lines conscripted from memory
whispered palimpsests
in the book of rain

bleared at the footbridge by the Saxon guard
stood waiting as if there is a toll to pay

then distant near, the phrases
of a song cold and clear as a spring
hesitant, repeating as if lost
or looking for something
in the rain falling on rain

held in the spire of a silver birch
long after their maker has gone

following me down the rain-swollen brook
past derelict mill, orchard, an old man
on a muddy bank untangling a piece of string
tied to a birch sapling.



Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Mike Averil