

Stephen Robertson

Sharp lines

High overhead, the geese are flying out
on their twice-a-day migration between feeding grounds
in lop-sided vees and slanting lines,
dark against the sky.
Ahead, another line,
flat and sharp and natural too:
pale sky encounters dark sea.

On the sand, a scattering of razor shells
that would be sharp if our toes were bare.
Behind us, in the wood,
tall straight pines reach for the sky,
dark trunks against the blue,
shed long thin needles.
In the distance,
gnarled broadleaf trees with twisted limbs
shed leaves with perfect sculpted edges.
A bramble sends great arcing shoots,
strong curves lined with jagged thorns,
seeking new ground to conquer.
Spiders' webs among the undergrowth.
Look closely: precise angular spirals
strung around precise radial anchor lines.

Across the channel, tidal creaks
meandering through the marsh
carve out sections of bank
leaving sharp cliffs of compacted mud.

Evening. A great dark cloud
fire-edged, blots out the setting sun.
Later, the clouds amass:
watch now: if you blink you will miss
the instant jagged challenge passing between them
or down to earth.
Seconds later, over the drumming rain,
a sharp wall of sound.

Later still, after the storm has passed
lie back on the wet beach
and watch the stars emerge.
Sharp dots; but watch and do not blink.
In time, an instant dash:
a shooting star.

To the sharp senses, nature has many sharp lines.