**What are you, owl** *by Rob Miles*

if not the wind’s wild tuner, unherdable

sky cat? Philosopher

my foot, more the quill-swivelling

killer, all plume-roots and iris. They say

your eyes are too big and round to allow

for much mind, but we all know

you’re uploading data

to the moon, winging over frost-

groomed trees and tiles. Folk’s fly-by-

night cockerel, yes, we find what’s coughed

up, we’ve seen your dirty tramp-troll

earplug-pellets, we know

you’ve visited from what you’ve gifted, itchily

relinquished, your tightly

and politely compacted

capsules of grief, the unholy

remains of bony souls you snared

to swallow, to regurgitate as tufted soundlessness

your dinner made dumb and not listening, listening

like us, not breathing, blue-lipped and hushed

since you don’t come near nearly

enough, it has to be you, you, you…

or air.