

**2029, and the last environmentalist
lists the [REDACTED] she can no longer name**

I'd always marked Spring
by the first dance of the [REDACTED]
butterfly, the lazy buzz of buff-tailed
[REDACTED] queens awaking from slumber.
Until the neighbours paved over their gardens
and all of those were gone.

And yes, the [REDACTED] moors above us
had for ever been a desert, where they
shot [REDACTED], poisoned [REDACTED], hunted [REDACTED]
to extinction, but when they bulldozed
the [REDACTED] behind us for housing,
filled in the ponds and hollows,
I wept for the loss of the wide-bodied
[REDACTED]; the [REDACTED] driven from their
nests, the legion of [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
who returned to spawn, and baked
on hot tarmac, pecked at by [REDACTED].
I bade farewell to the leathery twilight flit
of [REDACTED] horseshoe and common [REDACTED].

My children have never seen a [REDACTED].

Then the council cut down the avenue of [REDACTED]
– health, safety, expense, the old excuses –
and with them went the light emerald [REDACTED],
the chattering flock of [REDACTED],
the blue and great [REDACTED] that hung
like acrobats from thinnest twigs
and feasted. I whispered goodbye to
[REDACTED]; [REDACTED], the scarlet
blaze of the great-spotted [REDACTED]
who had hopped the trunks, searching
for grubs. I no longer woke in the night
stirred by the haunting call of an [REDACTED].

Last summer, I thought I heard a [REDACTED]
high in the empty blue of the sky,
its plaintive mew a lonely echo
heading north.

Since then, nothing.
Now, when the thousand TV channels
cease their chatter, all that's carried
on the hot dry wind

is silence.