

Among the Vultures, Alcoy

Terry Gifford

From a natural rock bench
we sit and peer over the rim
of the plunging ravine among
the cruising Pterosaurs
passing above, below – slow
as the sun burning our backs.

From a black eye aligned with the beak
through the white head we're flicked
a glance of utter disdain
straight from the Late Jurassic
where the wind's constance
widened these barn-door wings,
their black-shadowed trailing edge
circling the scents of death on
rising thermals from barren earth.

Entranced, we watch for hours
as evolution unravels before our eyes.
Two birds now wear gold
wing tags like jewellery, fluttering
their individuality audibly

as they pass. Now they have
numbers from a species counting
its years. But the birds already
have trained the butchers
from the noisy town below
to leave carrion on the plateau. This
is also a new development.
Like the evolution of the town
by a species exchanging gold. It will go.
For this is the landscape of vultures.