

In the Garden

Bird Spotter

He's settled on the feeder and he's looking quite absurd –
A downy, tufty, mufti kind of clown.
He's at the awkward halfway stage from fledgling to a bird.
What's the matter? Something up? Well, yes, what's up is down.

It sprouts up from on top of him and marks where feathers end.
It flutters gamely on his head and breast.
He's tattiness personified but thinks he sets a trend:
That's why he's proudly sticking out his chest.

And suddenly he chirrups, in an early-blackbird call.
I've often heard one better: it's a test –
But now, I am surprised to find his beak's not moved at all.
Ventriloquist? He's done his level best.

Very soon, of course, he'll realise that he's a grown-up bird,
A bird who's glossy, black and super-sleek –
No rough and scruffy visitor, whose call I've gladly heard.
I wonder if I'll know him, come next week.
