

Lex Runciman

The Planet Will Exist with or without Nature That Keeps Human Culture and Lets Us Live

Decades from now, centuries from now,
that you are, I dare not doubt,
and that you can read. And I hope Multnomah
County and its libraries yet exist, though by what means
they are visited confuses memory with fact—as today
a flung rope at the edge of what I saw

seemed a swallow banking for a mosquito.
Back here, teetering out of balance, your past
keeps building, building, pouring concrete,
positioning the unbundled floor joists
hoisted yesterday by a portable crane fueled by diesel.
Brave, short-sighted, deranged, we still have plans.

And yesterday, and again four days ago,
we saw—perched once, hovering the next—
two separate hummingbirds, called such
because that hum *is* the quick and indivisible
motion of wings, each of these small hoverings
and perchings ruby-throated, a small-feathered

neon invisible then flashing as the beak
and two eyes turn and scan.
We have too heavily borrowed against your present,
our resolves come to naught, so to say what might be

wished for for you (an incalculable love),
seems neither wise nor in our purview,

except for that ruby-throated bird
which is, in its flashing, I hope, visible,
agile as it is, quick to fly, alight, and look.

