

Victoria Chang

AT THE OFFICE LATE

The wind rises. The building lets in high-pitched trills
like the sound of sparrows trapped.

I am inside, at the center of this giant birdhouse, big as an
upstate hotel.

Through the offices, flocks dive and skitter for mealworms
at my feet, whistle

in parabola, two trumpeter swans atop a small lake,
a snowy owl on a ledge.

But all of this must end – the puffins gone, the thrumming
of wings, gone, the humming

gone, and everything they bring with them – yews, wind-
scrubbed ponds, sound of ram hooves,

of horn, gone. Nothing left here but these numbers,
thousands of them,

the Herman Miller chair, papers like resting tombstones.
But the owl, still here, looking

through its lens into each office, if only we had such vision –
it isn't so much knowledge I desire,

but the twilight before disgrace, the surprise of seeing
a once brilliant creature

wreathed in storm, and the temporary stillness of the water.