

Filled with White Feathers by Louise G Cole

In someone else's cabin in the woods,
I lie under a duvet, try not to think

feathers, of the dead birds covering
my night time, but I'm awake, imagining.

I know this was no seasonal moult,
but the soft down of the live-plucked,

eider ducks bred to fill high-end
plump pillows, quilts, and cat food cans.

The energy it took to grow feathers is
long gone, extinguished before flight was

ever missed, battery birds unable to sing
about their dreams of taking to the sky,

hens, ducks and geese never destined for
airborne experiences, unlike their pretty

cousins, the hummingbirds and peacocks,
with more colourful plumage at stake,

their destiny dusters and dreamcatchers,
boas, barrettes, feathery fascinators.

Here, I try to ignore softness and warmth,
pat guilt from the ticking covers, watch

white feathers float free, no messages
from the afterlife, whichever way I lie.