

Golden Point Award 2023
English Poetry – First Prize
Birds by Soh Yong Xiang

Into the living room I unwind
and encounter my mother. In her hands
plain biscuits, the newspaper complete
a picture: a woman in middle age.
Once, her sameness disappointed me;
now I am grateful. Softly, she begins:
Did you know, there is a clinic for birds
who in old age too can suffer, the way
we do. Arthritis, atrophy, a loss
of vision and hearing. I slip through
the tender light, to the table.
Outside, the indistinct voices of crickets,
and the night treading on. The kettle is empty.
The clock threatens twelve. Must everything
turn soft, in the end? And my mother,
softly replacing the papers.