



The Laburnum Top

Ted Hughes



Laburnum


The **Laburnum** top is silent, quite still In the afternoon yellow September sunlight, A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen.

Till the **goldfinch** comes, with a **twitching chirrup** A suddenness, a **startlement**, at a branch end.

Twitch: sudden movement of body

Chirrup: sound of bird

Startlement: state of being impressed and excited



Then **sleek** as a lizard, and alert, and
abrupt, She enters the thickness,
and a machine starts up Of
chitterings, and a **tremor** of **wings**,
and trillings — The whole tree
trembles and thrills.

Sleek: slim

Abrupt: sudden and unexpected

Chitter: sound of baby bird

Tremor: shaking movement





Launch

It is the engine of her family. She **stokes** it full, then flirts out to a branch-end Showing her **barred face identity mask** Then with **eerie** delicate whistle - chirrup **whisperings** She **launches** away, towards the **infinite** And the laburnum **subsides** to empty.

Stroke: To feed, to stock

Eerie: Strange and frightening

Infinite: without limit

Subside: to become less strong