

## GHOST TOWN, 1888

(A villanelle)

When nothing's left but a whisper, bare remains  
of a toppled tavern, squeaky door on hinge,  
blackbirds scratch and pick and scavenge grains

and feast in the old feed store. The window panes  
are broken out and battered. Rodents binge  
when nothing's left but a whisper, bare remains.

On a nearby hill, the moan of midnight trains  
awakens a feed store clerk in the graveyard dinge.  
Blackbirds scratch and pick and scavenge grains

as he stands at a nearby mound. The grave contains  
his typhoid son. The father feels a twinge  
when nothing's left but a whisper, bare remains.

He draws his son to the shop. The child complains.  
They shoo the rodents. Stamp. They cry and cringe  
as blackbirds scratch and pick and scavenge grains.

But it's no use. For all their precious pains,  
their story's at an end. They can't infringe,  
When nothing's left but a whisper, bare remains.  
The blackbirds scratch and pick and scavenge grains.

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