

A Fifth of Old Crow

MITCH LESCARBEAU

Feathers black as an undertaker's wingtips,
he struts resplendent with a monocle and a walking stick
and winks from the dusty bottle's label.

Odd choice, this death bird
for a cheap whisky's mascot.

The stogie in his cheeky beak, the almost-jeering face
deflate our imperious earth-bound prate

and take us back to Eisenhower, H-Bombs,
the 50's clubby, amiable misogyny.

And strange that I should stumble on this bottle at the bottom
of my dead mother's cedar chest, among the jetsam
of baby clothes, curls of a stranger's hair stuffed
in a tawny envelope, my fourth grade essays on Hitler
and photosynthesis.

And how is this spider, shriven to a dot and a few legs
like eyelashes, inside its corked and airy glass?

Old Crow winks:

I say, old chum, it's all a darkness.

Drink up, old sport.

This stuff'll kill ya.