

Dark Master Of The Sky

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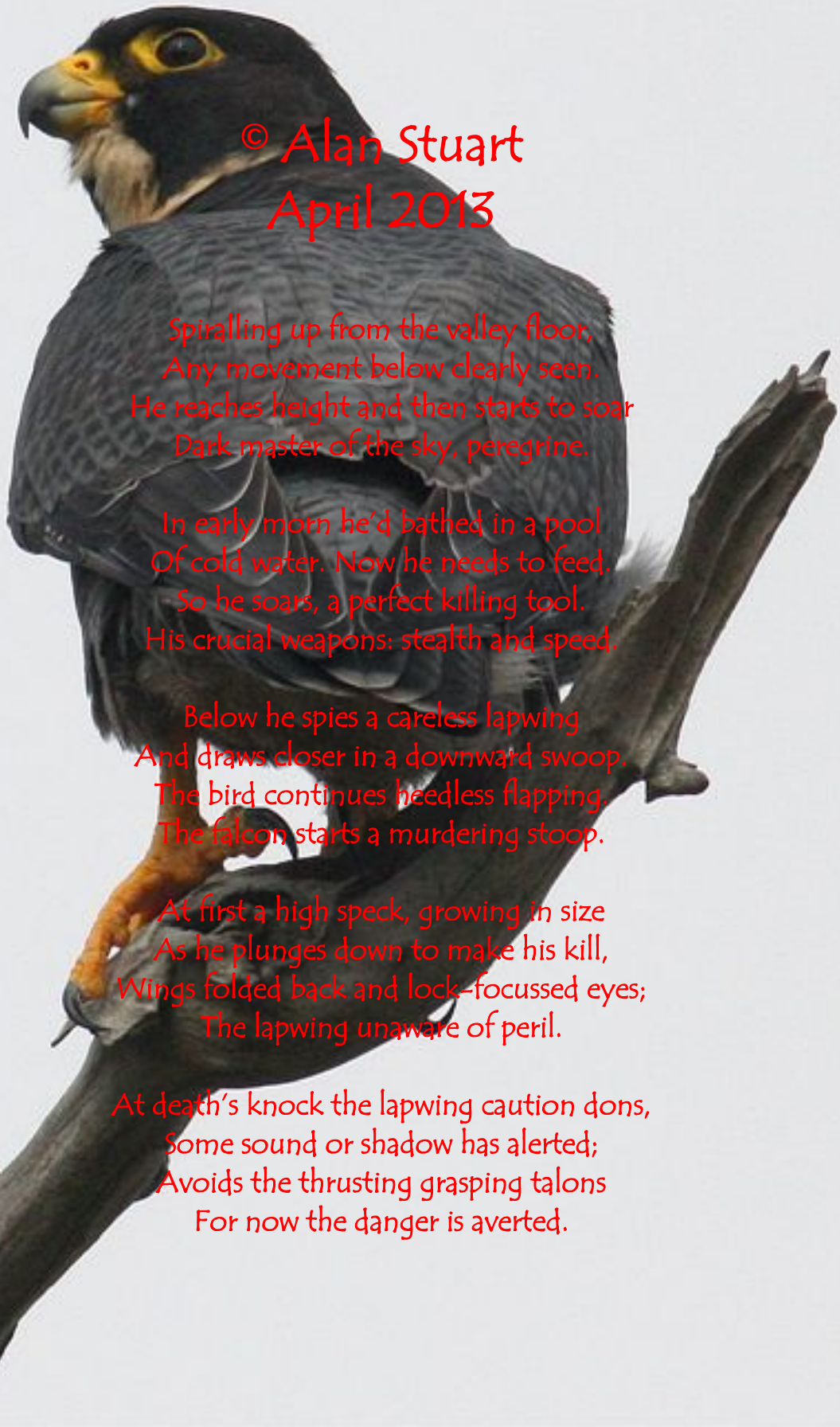
Spiralling up from the valley floor,
Any movement below clearly seen.
He reaches height and then starts to soar
Dark master of the sky, peregrine.

In early morn he'd bathed in a pool
Of cold water. Now he needs to feed.
So he soars, a perfect killing tool.
His crucial weapons: stealth and speed.

Below he spies a careless lapwing
And draws closer in a downward swoop.
The bird continues heedless flapping.
The falcon starts a murdering stoop.

At first a high speck, growing in size
As he plunges down to make his kill,
Wings folded back and lock-focussed eyes;
The lapwing unaware of peril.

At death's knock the lapwing caution dons,
Some sound or shadow has alerted;
Avoids the thrusting grasping talons
For now the danger is averted.



But the falcon rising from beneath
Can yet perform his murderous part
The one-sided battle is but brief
His cruel talons stab the bird's heart.

The stunned victim crashes to the ground
In a moment turned from life to death.
The peregrine lands, and with a bound,
Begins plucking feathers from the breast.

He tears at the sweet flesh, gulps it down
Drawing nurture from the lapwing's life.
Eating quickly, and making no sound
His rasp-edged bill like a razor knife.

In just ten minutes he's had his fill
And he leaves the carcass where it lies,
Flies to his roost tree, thinks of the kill
And when next he will patrol the skies.

He is a cold and ruthless killer
Until death's moment he comes unseen.
He is a cold and ruthless killer
Dark master of the sky, peregrine.

Inspired by *The Peregrine*, John A Baker, Penguin Books Middlesex England 1967

