If All the World Were a Blackbird

The title of the show at Goya is the title of a book of poems by the Hungarian poet, Sándor Weöres. I discovered Sándor Weöres via György Ligeti—a twentieth century Hungarian composer who was enamored of his poetry. Tom Service, the Guardian music critic, wrote in his guide to Ligeti's music in 2012:

> *Ligeti was drawn to the surreal linguistic games and imagery of Sándor Weöres. One of his very last pieces was Sippal, dobbal, nádihegedüvel, "With Pipes, Drums, Fiddles", a setting of Weöres's poems for percussion quartet and mezzo-soprano… The Sippal songs have that quality that all the best absurdist poetry does of making you confront big ideas through lightness of touch, humour, and sleight of hand.*

This last sentence resonates with me.

I want to make magic /to surprise / conjuring something new / perhaps ridiculous / unexpected / unpredictable / rhythms /sam rhymes with ham / silly / absurd / tainted by memories / of childhood / but made in the present / layers of love / I want to make magic / *tortoises circulated with honey cakes balanced on their backs…/ Why Stay here when I could be there?* *

I gather the small works together and call them:
  Song Cycles of Blackbirds
  while laying eggs
  while traveling over Africa
  while flying with angels
  while flying among the stars
  while coming down to earth
  while flying back in time (1 and 2)

Note on the large painting titled *Songs of Folding and Hiding*: My grandmother-in-law (born 1876) brought to South Africa from England, a Victorian publication titled *Warne's Model Cookery and Housekeeping Book* with completely outmoded gender roles and often bizarre recipes. It contained *Complete Instructions in Household Management* including a detailed guide to folding napkins.

With regard to the "hidden" animal photographs, my husband, Julien Davis and I published a book titled *The House in the Bush* in 2019. We were living in a house in Africa surrounded by wild animals. The photographs are his.

Jo Smail
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Cloud Cuckoo Land by Anthony Doerr