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Two Poems

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NO

This morning the magpie
(which floats all day
over the new-white ground)
held on among
the stiff wind-rattles
of the cottonwood's
branches,
and stared back.
I have been alone
watching him,
afraid you'd call.

READING MERWIN'S TRANSLATIONS OF
VIETNAMESE POETRY

*"Where is Paradise
So that I can mount the Phoenix and fly there?"*
—Ngo Chi Lan, "Autumn"

Now the war is not famous
we dance the dance of bees.
Mud-daubers at work again
on the quiet tasks of construction.

Beneath the eaves, we build
paradise with one hole
for entry & escape, pass through
one at a time.

Strangers are attacked.
Now the war is strange again
more layers can surround us,
work against this new season of the cold.