Mantiq a tayr*

Marsh warbler,
you are so full with babble, with rambler’s rove.
Reciter of cloud note, utterer of melodies—
each country carries your suitcase of songs.

I want to hear that stretch of Algeria
where you sing a high note loud and long.
Sweet ball of feathers, you are argot in mid-flight.

Libby Hart

* Mantiq a tayr: the language of the birds (Arabic). ‘The marsh warbler imitates fragments of songs of the other birds it hears as it flies across Europe and Africa. It is, in the words of David Rothenberg, “the one bird in the world who can recount its migratory path as a kind of songline where the journey is mapped into the music itself”.’—Jay Griffiths (Wild: An Elemental Journey, Hamish Hamilton, London, 2007)