Martin Robertson

Woodpeckers

They bear no company beyond their own, cannot endure to be other than alone.

They meet to mate, then share nurture of the young, yet in that loving care yield themselves to no oneness, will not even come, passing, beak to beak.

One within, one without, taps on the hollow wood, the one communication they admit, to time their exit and their entrance so they may not meet.

Beautiful creatures. The pity of it.

This poem is reprinted from Now and Then, the website devoted to the poetry of Martin Robertson, at http://rtnl.org.uk/now_and_then/