

A TINY SPIDER

A tiny spider rides on a wisp of gossamer
into the setting sun
A fragile entity in the universe,
trusting its destiny to the wind.
Knowing no tomorrow, nor yesterday,
only the reality of each day it is granted life

- Bernard de Vries, 2000

INSECT TRAP

Not a loud mouth
like the raucous Magpie and Raven
screeching to announce their presence.
But a quiet mouth
filled with liquid notes,
soft trills and twitters
bubbling rapidly, continuously.

Not a small mouth
like the Hummingbird with long, slender bill
reaching into bell flowers for nectar.
But a wide mouth
to trap flying insects,
short beak with bristles for funnelling
aerial plankton into the gaping maw.
Chattering insectivore pro,
Trapper Barn Swallow.

- Jean MacKenzie, *An Exaltation of Birds*, 1999

OVENBIRD

Tired of housekeeping chores
tending an oven (almost built)
she—smartly arrayed in
russet headdress
olive-brown coat, open
revealing a clean
black-striped white dress—
leaves her forest-floor home
and steps with showy pink legs
to the roadway

This grass-edged trail's her promenade
to be walked with much to-do
half-whirls and stops
and bobs (of tail)
and dabs (with beak)
her mincing gait
that of an old, old song's
old lady's passing by
some business here
and business there
an avian outdoor kind of
window shopping

Then satisfied, refreshed
she seeks once more
her oven-nest embedded in dry leaves
arched-over, hidden, and secure

- Victor C. Friesen

THE JOY OF RAIN

A quiet mist of rain descends
graying the fragrant air
blacking furrowed trunks of trees
beading the pendant foliage

Each dripping tree-umbrella is
a sheltering green cave
cool, moist, and lattice-windowed
a saunterer's brief snug haven.

- Victor C. Friesen

A SIMPLE THING

In mid-March I happened to see
a red squirrel atop a snowbank
just as I've often seen before
but this one surprised me by
simply stopping, lowering its head
and then eating snow...of course,
I reasoned, that's how they get
water in winter...but it was
a neat thing to see.

- Bob Nero

"YELLOW HAMMER"

There are laws for the human
about noise pollution
but this shrill bird
has never heard
of such edicts
for he projects

loudly
and repeatedly,
“*Flick! Flick! Flick!*”
or “*Wick! Wick! Wick!*”
as variation
in pronunciation.

During courtship time,
considering himself handsome
and glamorous,
he becomes more clamorous,
shouting, “*Kee-oo! Kee-oo!*”
and beating a loud tattoo,
as amorous proof,
on a wooden house roof,
or even on a metal pole.
Has he no emotional control?
Must he so reverberate
his grand passion for his mate?

Such a crazy lover
and intemperate drummer
should be confined
incarcerated
summarily
temporarily
for sentimental inebriation
and lovesick intoxication.
Charge him for shredding
the quiet of early morning.
Raucous sleep-wrecker—
Yellow-shafted Flicker.

- Jean MacKenzie, *An Exaltation of Birds*, 1999