Mechanism

By A. R. Ammons

Honor a going thing, goldfinch, corporation, tree,
    morality: any working order,
    animate or inanimate: it

    has managed directed balance,
    the incoming and outgoing energies are working right,
    some energy left to the mechanism,

    some ash, enough energy held
    to maintain the order in repair,
    assure further consumption of entropy,

expending energy to strengthen order:
    honor the persisting reactor,
    the container of change, the moderator: the yellow

    bird flashes black wing-bars
    in the new-leaving wild cherry bushes by the bay,
    startles the hawk with beauty,

flitting to a branch where
    flash vanishes into stillness,
    hawk addled by the sudden loss of sight:

honor the chemistries, platelets, hemoglobin kinetics,
    the light-sensitive iris, the enzymic intricacies
    of control,

    the gastric transformations, seed
    dissolved to acrid liquors, synthesized into
    chirp, vitreous humor, knowledge,

blood compulsion, instinct: honor the
    unique genes,
    molecules that reproduce themselves, divide into

    sets, the nucleic grain transmitted
    in slow change through ages of rising and falling form,
    some cells set aside for the special work, mind

or perception rising into orders of courtship,
    territorial rights, mind rising
    from the physical chemistries

    to guarantee that genes will be exchanged, male
    and female met, the satisfactions cloaking a deeper
    racial satisfaction:

heat kept by a feathered skin:
    the living alembic, body heat maintained (bunsen
burner under the flask)

so the chemistries can proceed, reaction rates
interdependent, self-adjusting, with optimum
efficiency—the vessel firm, the flame

staying: isolated, contained reactions! the precise and
necessary worked out of random, reproducible,
the handiwork redeemed from chance, while the
goldfinch, unconscious of the billion operations
that stay its form, flashes, chirping (not a
great songster) in the bay cherry bushes wild of leaf.
