

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.

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