

*A Scarlet Tanager  
Aights on a Branch*

JOHN GREY

The stopping, admiring,  
is all on my side.  
Your red feathers are ruffled  
with morning breeze.  
Flight is in your immediate forecast.

My eyes are wide.  
This is appraisal for one.  
You're merely at one step  
in your instinct-driven to-do list.

I imagine  
you balanced on my finger,  
your tiny claws gripping to bone,  
beak pecking gently at the knuckle.  
You imagine no such thing.

As you turn your head toward me,  
our eyes meet.

I claim a kind of pantheistic connection.  
You're charting a route  
into the sky.

My heart warms to this accidental encounter.  
You soar off with not the slightest thought  
for happenstance.

I acknowledge this now  
that the branch is empty  
and I'm alone again.  
Or, to put it in your terms,  
I always was alone.