

*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 arc 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.