

Bird Habits

Crows are the kind of birds
who prefer to walk or hop
instead of flying.

Can you imagine,
being able to fly and not?
Flying seems too wonderful
to be dismissed.

Perhaps the landing is the twist
—to ride the currents so adroit:
composed and free,
up near the clouds
who would ever want
to come back down?

Osprey on the other hand
live high above us all
defying land.

They live in nests
as elevated as they can.

Hunting from above
with no regrets
they use the skyway
to teach their young to fly:
to dive and hunt,
walking for them
is all but defunct.

Bird habits may seem romantic
but when it comes to flying
nothing is automatic.

Colors Changing

You were in such a hurry
on our walk that day when
the colors were just beginning to change
when you noticed a single dancing leaf
—even though you were five or six steps
past it already when you noticed.
You realized you had seen it
and turned half stride.
Stopped,
smiling like you found a reason to be happy
in a moment
you had all but missed
or were willing to let pass.
You wanted me to see too
so you retraced your steps
regained the moment
which seemed anything but worthy
until you turned around.
That leaf,
a single leaf on fire
flaming from the sun
and waving like a flag
hanging alone
among the green and yellow leaves
reminded you of joy.
A joy you had passed so many times.
A Joy you captured in this moment as if by mistake.
A mistake you corrected.
A joy you could not deny me.

Abscission

Look it up, search and find abscission.

There is a name for everything:

Platitude, limerence,

Pythagorean Theorem.

So many things with so many names.

Not long after we are born we learn
that everything has a name

and we begin to say them,

call things by their names to

bring them magically to us.

The stem that holds the leafy
part to the tree branch owns the name of petiole.

Maybe it doesn't matter so much the name,

until you feel the inexhaustible pull of the world

yourself and realize the impossible strength

it takes to hold on, and stay connected

through the seasons and all the changes

in the weather: wind and rain, and hurricanes.

The petiole subsists.

Things that make such a difference

have names you want to pronounce correctly

and teach to your children, whom you have named.

And when the fall comes, and the petioles

take part in the leaf abscission,

we stand in wonder of the changing colors,

admiring the emptying trees as they accept their loss

almost as if they had a choice.

One Day at the Arboretum

(or How I Met and Fell in Love with a Japanese Crepe Myrtle Tree
- hope I haven't given too much away)

On the most perfect day,
degrees just right at 77 fahrenheit
I fell in love with a Japanese Crepe Myrtle tree
during our visit to the Raulston Arboretum.
We had taken an uphill turn at the weeping willows
when a woman came running down crying.
She'd lost her daughter in among the sea of trees.
She was inconsolable in her fear of loss.
Immediately we scrambled and dispersed
between the groves and separating paths.
It wasn't long before you found her
hidden in a cluster of fruit trees we had passed.
Smiling and cheerful as a blossoming bud,
the little girl had no idea she had been lost.
You must never ever, scolded her mother
as she grabbed her hand, and yanked it hard
to make her understand. That's when we turned
continuing on into the Japanese exhibit
and there she was, fully grown,
Lagerstroemia fauriei, my Japanese crepe myrtle.
At the height of her beauty, yet calm and shady.
I got as close as I could without touching.
Bark like skin only smoother. Limbs like flesh
but stronger, more solid and serene:
as if my feelings for you had turned to seed
and grown into a tree.