

Mary Newell

HUMMINGBIRD TRIO

Parallel Maneuvers

Hummingbird tangles with salvias
generations of entwine
fold into this smooth bonding

*meanwhile among bipeds
closeness courts disaster
number crunchers gasp*

the birds, unruffled

*food staples stacked in sequester
bodies loaded on a cold truck
the silence of corpses*

Hummer locomotes by quiver
broadcasts by wing whir
ripple of flight wake
figure-eight spin-outs
flash iridescent green

sheer delight, a nourishment

frequent sweets sustain
fast-pulse heart
whiz-zip

hover to sip
with forked tongue
drawing in nectar
from deep throated blooms

*human to human-and-more
resilience in difficult stints
plunge into rusty rustic skills*

segue toward supple adaptation

salvias' trapdoor stamens rub pollen
on transfixed head of sipper
who soon flits with gold corona
to blend pollen from mauve and blue,
forging new "ultra-violet" salvia tone.

some days, tumble to profound solitude

*fissures from nutritive depths
bubble up lucent*

.....

Flying jewels fading

During pandemic pandemonium,
names of old friends echo
call to verify they remain
among the visible.
Some still on the map,
but fading out of likeliness.

Meanwhile,
hummers and salvias,
that co-evolutionary duo
together again - and again
throughout the Americas -
yet threatened with shrinking habitat

delectable details recorded
of various *Joyas voladores* - flying jewels:

last seen last century,
Godin's turquoise-throated puff-leg:
“mostly green with blue undertail coverts and white powder-puffs of downy
feathers on the legs, and the male has a bluish-purple throat patch”

Recently named, already endangered,
blue-throated hill-stars of Andean cloud forests
Colibrí del Chimborazo

their names...

If you left behind no nametag
or little else
who will remember your nickname?
was it

jazz crazed
lead from behind
walked life lightly
knew a thing or two

dressed to bamboozle
helpful when you called her
never home
?

Among hummers,
the names of the endangered ones,
roll over in your mouth:

Coeligena orina
Dusky Starfront-let

Colibrí de vientre de zafiro
Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird

Calzadito Admirable
Colorful Puff-leg

these

still on the map...

.....

Inter-volve

O voltaic garden flit

your volant

frivols

smile me,

hummingbird

your circumvolutions

phosphorescence

on

gyrating wings

fructuous volery

profligate pollen disburser

emit a hint

how not to clutch so hard

it shreds tendons

rips heart-house

joy in vol, in vol-a-til-ity

deep intake

lunge into spacious

.....

My throat at risk

Get your hands off my throat
and I'll tell you what I think of your
high-hand

low-down ways

oh

uh

WHAP

good thing the kick and run technique
comes naturally - it was not in the white-girl handbook,
the one my mother forgot to give me -

the smothered scream
fear chokes, or turgid fingers
tightening on the adam's apple
But I can kick and run
not looking back,
but listening for footstrikes

Behind the safety of the door,
assess: core ok,
though shivering

to this day I remember
the rasp in his voice

Adrift in undrinkable waters

“Between words and deeds there is a sea”

Angela Merkel

As a toddler, in search of
starfish, a rip tide almost
carried me away. Safe arms
surrounded tumbling hollers.

“Almost” is a long way from
drowning. Sand in the mouth,
sea vomit, limbs flailing -
then home to lap of comfort.

Distant calamities trouble calm
attempted rescues, urgencies:
salt/ famish/ heatstroke/ topsize
Ocean swallows without a burp.

Arms can't reach through
a newscast to help those
stripped from home land
who risk the turbulent vault

The ocean tantalizes.
Seduced by its rhythmic pulse,
I forget undertow, dead zones,
toxic cargo permutating cells.

Bank Tangle

A train stop anomaly: twig nest
tucked into branch tangle:
good spot to scan for prey -

Across the Hudson, houses
tucked in to bank slope:
possession, view, convenience -

settled in for the duration.
Just nineteen miles downstream,
smoke rises from Indian Point.

And the river flows north
unhurried, echoing afterglow.
Ice floes crackle in the gloam.

note:

Charles Darwin used the phrase “tangled bank” to refer to the intermixture of life forms “dependent upon each other in so complex a manner” (*On the Origin of Species*).