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### When Dreams Die

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*When Dreams Die*

CHRIS JENSEN

I wonder in the whole history of the church  
if a man ever brought a red-tailed hawk,  
and one wounded, to Divine Liturgy?

He saw her that morning by the edge of the highway  
lurching in circles over gravel and glass,  
lured by the bait of road-kill squirrel  
like some ironic Icarus who flew too low  
into an ocean of asphalt  
only to be struck by a speeding car while her mate  
cried songs of concern from a nearby tree.

When our Samaritan pulled to the shoulder  
he approached, spoke to it, made good plans.  
Minutes later he came into the nave  
cradling the wounded creature across his chest,  
standing up front by the tall cross  
while children softly approached, serious and calm,  
like visiting a friend at the hospital. And they petted it.

Of course, we all hoped the mission of mercy  
would end happily with a brief stay at the Audubon  
and then a glorious release  
but instead, right at noon, as the chanting ended  
and the priests divested, the light slowly dimmed  
in her wild eyes like two tiny coals gone cold.

No, the brave bird would never rise to fly  
or find her branch of olive, instead spending her last hour  
in the arms of the creature that paved her doom—  
just another wounded soul in a world where death  
must find its prey.

Chris Jensen has taught English at Portland Community College  
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