

MOZART & THE BIRDS

by **Frank Tuoti**

Dedicated to my brothers at The Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina, California

Each early morn, in the virgin space between dark
and day, Mozart and the birds come.
Mozart first, for black still sheaths the sky.
Then, at first glimmering, the birds — countless
birds, drenching day's first breath with incredible
song. And Mozart fills the air!

Chirps and warbles, trills and gurgles accompany
Mozart on his melodic flight — each note, of bird
and man, of origin Divine.
Large red coffee cup in hand, I submerge within each
morning's freshly brewed symphony, a flawless blend of
bird-man genius.

A near-distant telephone pole engraves a cross upon
the breast of sky, etching its remindful silhouette
more sharply as pale gray turns to pinkish blue.
And Mozart fills the blue-gray air!

Quail and sparrow, dove and cardinal, cactus wren and
pin-sharp mocking bird indulge their picky appetites,
feasting upon a welcoming carpet of store-bought seed.

Sing ye feathered flutes, ye plumaged piccolos!
Sing of the One Who sings within us all!
Chant your inbred psalter in your innocence — there
is no Pharisee in your prayer!
From watchful parapets of low-slung branches, others
counterpoint your peppery chorus. And Mozart fills
the rising morning air.

New-born day has fully birthed from womb of night
and, one by one, the birds depart their depleted
feasting ground (not a seed remaining), to return in
twilight's glare, when day begins to pull upon her
nightgown.

My large red coffee cup is empty. With a final melodic
flourish, Mozart informs me that he, too, is "played out"
for now, to return with the dusk-lit birds.
I rise and slowly begin to move into the day's trivial
pursuits. Silently, secretly, Someone stirs within.
And Mozart fills the air!

* "Mozart & the Birds" is reprinted with the permission of the editors from the "thomas merton memorial issue" of *kentucky poetry review* (edited by Wade Hall, Joy Bale Boone, Greg Swem, & Robert Daggy) 24 (Fall 1988).