The Cedar Waxwing

Carolyn Masshardt

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It had not been in my nature to observe nature
At least of the familiar sort of trees and birds
And flowers and landscapes.
Yes, to sky and clouds and stars,
But that is looking up and not out.

My windows have been backdrop to humans these many years
People at all times of day and night, a city neighborhood
The pious and privileged and imperiled
Rushing, even hiding, a familiar rhythm of curse and comfort
Sirens interrupt the already noisy calm.

Here, my August day is too still
A campus in waiting for all that will come
A little sorrowful as only a city person might fathom
Too little of all that usually meets eye level.
There is no background noise to set a life alarm.
And then a human visitor comes to hammer out a project yet to be.
Welcome as food or drink to the stranded in this August heat.
Soon, we see a Goldfinch, Cardinal, Tufted Titmice and a Chickadee
And the bleached, haggard, overgrown land becomes alive.

I had thought I was alone all that day,
the window open for only a breeze.
And then I see more; Blue Jays and Song Sparrows,
and looking out quietly and at eye level
A Cedar Waxwing may appear.

Carolyn Masshardt is Director of Field Education for the School of Social Work.