

## Marina Romani

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**from a fine beginning —**

crystal glasses  
touch  
ring  
the crystal  
gleams  
with wine's  
red flame  
or cognac's  
golden glow

as liquids flow  
the colors ripple  
reflect  
the light  
—recall  
the warmed heart  
his eyes  
his voice  
and mine

fluid passions  
angers fired  
then the drives  
at high speed  
in deep night  
intense night  
muddled morning  
hollow heart  
dull sorrow  
—regret

the compulsion  
the desire  
seeming need  
to repeat  
endless

that fine beginning  
and the rest of it  
an opaque  
dark  
memory

## **Bird Ballet at Sunset**

—*for Joan*

At last—  
Crone steps out, shakes seeds  
into her feeder in the forest  
and a feathered flurry erupts.  
They've been waiting for it  
this nightly bird treat  
—her appearance means  
best bedtime snack.

The assemblage begins:  
black-eyed juncos, crested blue jays  
red-tipped woodpeckers, downy finches  
some simply—  
speckled one, long-beaked one  
occasional guests, all colors, all sizes.  
It's like a busy traffic circle  
or a well-choreographed ballet  
with order in the chaos  
even if she can't discern the pattern.

Juncos seem to rule the day:  
on the long bar that holds the feeder  
three, four, five line up, perching, patient.  
Each waits its turn till others have their fill.  
When one flies up, the next one takes its place  
—a constant series of arrivals and departures.

A hierarchy of size, too, comes into play:  
as woodpeckers assert their privilege  
others respectfully cede their places.  
Sorties alternate— the timid, the brave  
familiar familial battles quickly resolve

until bombardier pigeon plummets  
from the sky— avaricious, greedy  
feathers scatter, real chaos reigns.  
Time for Crone to intercede —  
from within, she bangs on the glass  
adds her voice for fierce effect.  
Clearly unwelcome, the pigeon, flies off  
beak filled with loot already snatched.

Peace returns—  
the busy bird bar concludes its day's business  
the guests disperse, vanish in their nightly shelters.  
Sun rays flash, slide down the horizon, light fades  
forest rhythms slow into the night's silence  
and only the ocean keeps on humming below.

**Marina Romani** lives in Monterey, California, where solitary walks along oceanside trails allow her mind to meander toward new poems, some of which she eventually writes down. In the last ten years, her work has appeared with some regularity in print and on-line literary journals, primarily ones publishing on California's central coast. Marina's first book, *Child Interwoven* (Park Place Publications, 2016), is a collection of memories in poem and prose of her early childhood, spent in China and the Philippines during the 1940s. Her second, *Chiaroscuro Eye*, a set of twenty-two poems that view experience through interplays of light and shadow, was published by FreeReadPress in spring, 2018. Both titles are available on Amazon.com (see books/Marina Romani).