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## ORIOLING

You love their singing—the thrush, the orioles—  
    though they don't perform for you. Theirs is a clan  
song: *My bugs, my bough, my mate*, and:  
    *See how bright the orange and black of my feathers.*  
Nor do they sing for blighted love the hard  
    blues of loss we would, or for joy,  
but because they can't help it, because song  
    blossoms from the stem of their being bird.  
Human, you can't help trying to understand  
    what stalk you flower from, what undertow  
rises in the flutist to quicken with breath  
    the arcs and dips of prior minds, or mind  
itself, playing with fugue, with  $E = MC^2$   
    inventing wheel, organ, flute, B Minor Mass—  
Buddha—the bomb. The song you bear buds  
    under your mind's tongue like a first word.

—Ann Silsbee

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