



Cattle Egret

Driving from Houston to Beaumont in mid-summer,
It's really hot, and the humidity's a bummer,
The crops are green on the side of the road,
And the fields clearly show where the rain just flowed.

My attention wanders to the field on the right,
Taking in a scene that would give Audubon a fright,
For when he was touring and painting in Texas,
The cattle egret was absent – without Texas nexus.

For you see this egret is a new immigrant,
Whose arrival was propelled by forces most innocent,
This bird has been moving to the north from the south,
To meet daily needs – to put food in its mouth.

From Africa to South America in 1873,
Arriving in North America in 1953,
This bird going from nothing to number one,
Regarding egret numbers, it is second to none.

It's interesting to reflect upon the spread of a species,
When it's by leaps and bounds and not small degrees,
For this smallish white egret invaded like an army,
It found a niche and was expansive and hardy.

Now these are egrets of the field and farm,
They follow the cows and seem to do no harm,
It is somehow comforting for me to know,
That amidst decline some species can grow.

I admit to a bias for species that are endemic,
Particularly in the midst of this virus pandemic,
But that bird in the painting has worth as a life form,
It's a living being whose existence I affirm.

Earth Church welcomes all new immigrants,
And we should be open to all life participants,
That find their way across the Rio Grande,
And locate themselves on newly plowed land.

So welcome to Earth church
Pull yourself up a pew
And try opening your heart
To an immigrant or two.