Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

I’ve heard the story about my uncles
When they were boys -
A story about a bird they saw
Down in the Cocodrie Swamp -
A bird that My Uncle Charles called
The “Good God Woodpecker” as in
“Good God - look at that Woodpecker”.

It happened during the ‘30s
And I always wondered if they were talking
About the Ivory-Billed –
A magnificent bird that has been
Denied to me,
A bird that I may never see,
A bird that has apparently
Ceased to be.
It’s just not here anymore.

It isn’t simply that one specimen died
But instead it’s that an entire species
Has left the Earth.
Left us with less.
Left me wishing for the Good God
For whom it was named,
The same God with whom
I am angry
For letting us humans be so blind,
For letting us destroy other living things
Without thought and without care.
AAGGHHHHHHHHHH.
Good God I miss that woodpecker.
Red Bellied Woodpecker 3

On a virus avoidance walk  
On the lookout for covidiots.

A cry of pure delight in being alive  
Pervades the neighborhood,  
Followed by ratta tat tat,  
Ratta tat tat, ratta tat tat,  
The red-bellied woodpecker letting us know  
That it’s amongst us today,  
And feeling good about it.

Aagh, exclamations of the joy of life,  
The joy of living, all the more compelling  
When death pervades the news,  
When we live in fear of hugging friends,  
And it leaves me disoriented, fuzzy headed,  
Like I think my red-bellied friend must feel  
From hammering on a tree all day,  
Except that his head comes with a shock absorber,  
Nature’s technology on display once again.

I wish I had a shock absorber  
To take my fuzzy head away,  
To cushion the impact of the sad news  
But I have trouble keeping it at bay.
In times like this I look nature
To find the balm for my ailing spirit
I breathe the air and hear the red-bellied
And find the will to get on with it.

Thank you today, mr. red-bellied woodpecker
For giving me help when I needed a lift,
For stitching me back from disrepair
For putting a mend to my soul’s rift.