



Loggerhead Shrike 3

Heading south on FM 521  
Crossing the blooming spring prairie.

The masked bird sits on the roadside fence  
Watching me and waiting for me to pass,  
Calmly sitting over the prey it has impaled  
On the barb extending from the wire,  
The butcherbird at work,  
Meeting its daily needs.

My father introduced the loggerhead and me  
Along the floodway in the Rio Grande Valley,  
The two of us guys in a green station wagon,  
Driving along on a Saturday afternoon,  
Him telling me how the crops were doing,  
How much rain there had been,  
Letting me drive for the first time,  
Stopping in the shade and noticing  
The grey and white bird with the black mask  
Watching over us.  
“Lookie there, J’Bo” my father said,  
“That’s a butcherbird and he’s well named”

And today when I see that masked bird  
I smile and thank my father for the time  
We spent together on the dusty roads  
Of South Texas – just the two of us,  
Hanging out, sharing life,  
And meeting the butcherbird.



THE YEAR

LACEY AND DANZIGER

## Scissor-tailed Flycatcher 2

Driving across the Katy Prairie  
Looking at wildflowers and life  
And talking with the split-tailed flycatcher.

The scissortail flycatcher is a wise bird  
Who knows the ways of nature,  
Who strongly believes in the circular economy,  
And making money from his pasture.

“There’s too much carbon in the air  
And not enough is being removed.  
But with creativity and the right attitude  
Our temperature growth can be smoothed.

“Encourage the ranchers to raise their cows  
Using multiple paddocks and creative ways  
And restore the system and enrich the soil  
And watch the ranchers see that it pays.”

The scissor tailed professor continues his talk  
He’s frustrated with the status quo  
We’re too divided against one another  
And not working toward the common goal.

And I and the scissortail sat and talked  
For much of the afternoon

And since that time, I've been convinced  
And I'm humming a different tune.

So next time you see that peach-breasted bird  
Speak with him about things economic  
You'll find a good talker awaits on the wire  
You'll be astounded by his logic.

There is knowledge in nature to call upon  
If only we think to ask  
And with the scissortail success lies ahead  
And glory awaits in which you may bask.

As I leave the peach color slashes the sky  
Followed by two trailing ribbons of tail,  
And the ethereal scissors call out to me,  
Follow my advice and you will not fail.