Eastern Phoebe 5

The smallish gray bird with a darker head
And saddlebags on the side of her breast
Flits around the backyard, lighting and bobbing,
Crowning the yucca leaf like a crest.

Occasionally she darts to catch a bug
And scurries back to the nest she erected
Where the eaves and screen meet above my perch
From which I find enjoyment unexpected.

I sit on the porch to meet my neighbors,
And a mixed group of species they turn out to be,
The raucous scrub jay dominates the conversation,
Is the Bewick’s wren singing a he or a she?

The yellow-billed rain crow gurgles from near,
The bullies, the whitewings, generate fear,
Pushing the smaller ones away from the feeder,
But the lovely red cardinal emerges as leader.

Yet my phoebe seems beyond it all,
Within but without, aloof with much gall,
Needing no feeder, finding her bugs,
A private life that at my heart tugs.

Gentle yet firm, catching flies, living life,
A celebrant attending the church of the Earth,
Making her way, living each day,
Making me glad that I arrived here by birth.

For what is the Earth but a miracle of emergence,
A place where we all are allowed to exist,
A place of celebration, of humility, of wisdom
A place of connectedness none should resist.

So welcome to Earth Church
Pull yourself up a pew
Sing and pray with the Phoebe
And enjoy being you.
Eastern Phoebe 4

Sitting at my desk on virus alert
Trying to stay safe and apart
But wishing for a bit of company
To make me smile and warm my heart.

I have a friend named Eastern,
She bobs up and down on branches,
She can only sit still for a period of time,
And then on the air she dances.

She likes to feast on flying things,
And catches them she does,
And then returns to the very same branch,
To end the insect’s telltale buzz.

The ways of nature may seem cruel
To an observer just dropping in,
But this way of life has been around a while,
And meeting your needs is not a sin.

I talk to my friend as she bobs up and down,
And I ask her advice about life and things,
And she never fails to find the time
To help me work out life’s nasty dings.

We talk about important qualities to have
In someone you’d call a friend,
We listen, we emote, we talk, and we quote
The phrases that will lead to a positive end.

I’m truly grateful for my friend Eastern,
And I stop and talk whenever I can,
When I greet her I smile and feel good inside,
And when we part, I’m a happy man.