Virus Vigil

Poetry by Jim Blackburn
Art by Isabelle Scurry Chapman

WHILE ANY RESOLVE FIND
THE RUBY OF HEARTS
THOUGHTS, YOUR
EMBEDDED
YOU ARE THE AGENT OF
SEND ENERGY TO THE CENTER
OF THE DATE
LIKE LEVITATING
ANGELS
TURNING
COOL NEDS
OF
THEIR PLACE YOU WHIRL
CE DRAWDOWN
AT END
AN END TO SUN
NEW
AS THE ONINGS
THE DANCE
The Green Jay

A few years back during the spring migration
On the Fennessey Ranch near Refugio, Texas.

They call it “Fennessey magic”,
That wonderful coalescence of nature and spirit
That happens in special places -
Places that have been set aside
And preserved for the birds
And other living things with whom
We share the Earth –
A place like the Fennessey Ranch.

The Mission River is running high and dark
After a night of thunder, lightning and rain.
The orioles are in the treetops across the river.
A green kingfisher darts by, and
A flock of Franklin’s Gulls passes over when
Someone hears an owl in the woods behind us,
Our guide hooting back, and it appears,
A barred owl coming to check out
The new voice within its domain,
A stubby bird that sits and checks us out,
A peaceful moment of shared encounter
That explodes in an eruption
Of green and yellow and black and blue
As one and then two and then three
Green jays cry out and attack the stoic owl
That sits there and looks only mildly annoyed
At the green avengers
Putting on an aerial display
Of noise and color
While the owl stands firm,
Granting us a glimpse
At the way life is lived
Here in the riparian woods
Along the Mission River.

This is the magic of the Fennessey Ranch,
A landmark chapel in the Church of the Earth,
A special place where I came to worship
And connected with a power higher than myself
Off of FM 2678 west of Copano Bay
In Refugio County.