Black Capped Vireo

Walking near Lone Man Creek
In the Texas Hill Country in late spring.

The rains came to the Hill Country last week –
Soaking, penetrating rains bringing water
That found seams within the limestone shelves –
Seams that slowly leak life-giving water
That is open and available to the small vireo
With the black cap that flits down
To the natural cup and drinks
The life-giving elixir,
A vireo that has a special status,
A vireo that is labeled by our actions,
A vireo that is ENDANGERED.

I visualize this lovely living thing sipping
And see the essence of life,
The essence of existence
On this beautiful place we call Earth,
A place inhabited by a magical spirit -
A force called life -
Something that exists nowhere else but here
On Earth that is my church -
Life that is fragile –
Life that is a flame needing tending,
And I get it – loud and clear.

Today I am calling all, calling you
To be a keeper of the flame of life,
Protector of things endangered,
Protector of those that are under attack,
Protector of those unable to protect themselves
Protector of the DNA that holds the key to life.

And to protect this endangered vireo,
We must provide food, water and shelter –
Save the springs and seeps,
Protect the oak cedar scrub
And give life a chance -
So simple and yet so hard.

And at night the black capped one lands
Within my dreams and wraps me in his wings
And says thank you.