Virus Vigil

Poetry by Jim Blackburn

Art by Isabelle Scurry Chapman

THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE
JOHN 8:36

ORANGE INTERCHANGEABLE FLY
A.H.
Indigo Bunting 3

The pretty blue bunting comes in the spring
When the songbird migration is taking wing
To come back north to nest yet again
Implementing nature’s strategy to win.

But that strategy devised eons ago
Is facing issues we cannot forego.
Today the changes come hard and fast,
We must act soon before the die is cast.

The bunting and I sit and talk near the beach
And he looks to me and asks me to teach
My students about the needs of his type
Without overstating, without much hype.

He says prairie nesters have lost habitat,
And they need a program to come to bat
For massive restoration of native grasslands
In the loamy heartland and western sands.

And I say there exists a great coincidence
And I can say this exists with great confidence
That restoring the prairie puts carbon in the soil
Undoing the effects unleashed by big oil.

And the blue one smiles and then laughs out loud
He looks at me and says he would be proud
To benefit from a win-win strategy
That helps to avert a global tragedy.

What is now required is that all come behind
An action that implements ties that bind
The rancher’s needs with those of the bunting
And reaches politicians without confronting.

I watch as the bunting resumes eating seeds
As he offers a last thought about what he needs -
Cash transactions to store carbon in the ground
A strategy he assures me is economically sound.

So welcome to Earth Church
Pull yourself up a pew
Put your tithe on the table
For the bunting and you.