

Visiting the Birds of America at the National Gallery East

Will I make peace
with my culture –
that brash and bold
America *can do* and
woe to those that won't?

At least I know I
grow more fond
of art –
Benton, Ailee,
Copeland, O'Keefe –
hewn unmistakably
from my land.

And, today,
the birds of Audubon,
a flicker –
stately, concise –
brings a memory
three decades old
school project
bent over
struggling to create that
not-quite-bright red crest
and calls me to forewish
my progeny
(more diligent than I)
will gain what I did not.

Fitting, too,
I think,
this Audubon,
immortalizing birds
by slaying them,
threading with wire,
and posing them to mimic life.

Is this my tension with
America?
Its urge to glorify,
destroy, and re-create?

The gallery cafe
my fitting place to muse,
its chicken tarragon
good food for thought.