

Dan Sherman

Regret

My mother could trill, uncannily
Like a cardinal.

They'd pass through, to sing
In our two maples, en route
To a patch of sweetbrier or blackberry.

She'd listen for their call, and
Walk out on our covered porch, joining
In their Purdy! Purdy! Purdy! or Coo Cher! Coo Cher!

Never searching the tree tops, she
Stared into the distance, with
Her private thoughts, sharing
In a communion of bird song.

What would you say, if
There was one day, one day only, that
Could be turned back,
And a man's biggest regret
Was that spring day
In the thicket of willow and sumac

Close by the Missouri River, when
A cardinal, his crest flared high,
Dressed in scarlet, was singing
When he shot it.