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The Hopeful, 2009
oil on canvas, 33 x 22 in



courtesy: the artist

THOMAS CRAWFORD

Canto

It's more than hunger, isn't it,
that wants us to bring down
what flies. Like the magician
pulling pigeons out of his top hat,
I'd like to bring you back again
dear bird, to fly and multiply
in our world. But we are dreamers
and the stuff of stunts and lies,
and this one, well,
we can't shoot our way
out of this one.

Martha,
in your little shoebox, soft
feathers, the reds already in fade,
black eyes buttoned up
forever, meat bird, extinct bird.
My god, how rock final is that?

Our jets are slick and clumsy.
Nothing to compare to a bird
wing so long in coming,
like our opposable thumbs.
What should we hope for now,
the sky all contrails,
emptied of you?

Thomas Crawford is the author of seven books of poetry, including *If It Weren't for Trees*; *I Want to Say Listen*; *Lauds*, which won the Oregon Book Award for Poetry; *The Temple on Monday*, winner of the ForeWord Book of the Year Award; and *Wu Wei*. He's a recipient of a Pushcart Prize and two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships. *The Names of Birds*, his most recent collection, received a starred review in *Booklist*.