

Red Tail Hawk, A Farewell

dolores subia bigfoot © 2008

He flew in front of me today and it was only Monday
This one was young, a bit of red beneath his tail tips
His home is not that far from me so maybe his visits will be much more
I gently search my mind for when others came to call
I cried when I saw that one sitting so majestically upon the highway sign
He watched me drive into the hospital parking lot with reassuring eyes
This one was older, wiser, and much redder

We held hands entwined when one perched across the way
Our front door just steps behind us as we viewed the western sky
Seeing one that early morning brought more tears and blessed reassurance
Each time there was a halt to life, too quicken of the breath, a bothersome sign or else some
critical decline
He would appear

His appearance from the sky above, or sitting, soaring, flying high, or flying low
A brief pause that permitted us to close our eyes and utter words of thankfulness

There were mighty sights from time to time
Pairs, small families, or just a single solitaire to glide with outstretched wings

The one final time he let us know was the song of last farewell
He opened more to let us view his splendor spread against the noon day glow
We stood again with hands entwined

After we had laid him out soon to be covered over with moist fresh red dirt
His home was finally his beloved Turtle Creek
How could we ever say good bye
That last song with the slow low beat, carrying the sound across the earthen ground
We stood, braced against the final act
And then we caught the motion up
He soared, he dipped, he drew figure eights more than 100 feet way high
He hovered over the edge of time
His wings were wide, they were distinct,
His color clear and bright and red
His way with wind, with sky, with form
We keep him in our sight
He dipped once more
He held us well
He knew our hearts
He knew our need
He helped to make the passing sweet
He circled once before he took good bye away

When Cheyenne Chief and Tribal Historian John L. Sipe Jr, who's Cheyenne name is Ah-in-nist (Red Tail Hawk) was buried on Jan 31, 2008 on the Broken Arm allotment in western Oklahoma, a Red Tail Hawk flew and circled overhead.