

Lit Instructor

William Stafford

Day after day up there beating my wings
with all the softness truth requires
I feel them shrug whenever I pause:
they class my voice among tentative things,

And they credit fact, force, battering.
I dance my way toward the family of knowing,
embracing stray error as a long-lost boy
and bringing him home with my fluttering.

Every quick feather asserts a just claim;
it bites like a saw into white pine.
I communicate right; but explain to the dean--
well, Right has a long and intricate name.

And the saying of it is a lonely thing.