

## **FROM MOTHER TO MOTHER**

*Light-yellow beak, gaping wide,  
Shrivelled starling cast aside  
By issues of its parents' seed,  
Goaded by hunger and by greed.  
Its plaintive cry, so frail,  
Eclipsed by the clatter in the vale.  
Pushed and trampled by its peers  
Whose actions confirm the fears  
That scratches there will be to heal  
Preceding every hope of a meal.*

*A peck, a push, a shove;  
A expression of brotherly love?  
Nay! In Her quest for perfection  
Mother Nature affords no protection  
To the pawns on life's board  
Adopting none as Her ward.  
In strict compliance with Her law  
Stubbornly She entertains no flaw  
And casts off the ill and meek  
Listless to the needs of the weak.*

*Thus She makes each soul the rival  
Of others in the struggle for survival.  
To that law, shrivelled starling subjected,  
Pushed, shoved and scornfully rejected.  
Callously flung aside as faeces –  
A heavy burden on the species!  
Hovering between life and eternity  
Pitifully aware, yet, of the severity  
Of its tragic, feeble condition  
It staunchly refuses to offer a rendition.*

*Enkindled by hunger and desire,  
Revived as the Phoenix from the fire,  
In a final hope of being well-fed  
Little starling rears its bony head.*

*Its body it throws into the fray,  
Intent to live yet one more day.  
And with a shrill, demanding cry  
It heralds its refusal to wait and die.  
Thus, in a valiant, mammoth feat  
It wobbles uneasily to its feet.*

*From Her hunt among the ferns,  
Mother starling to the nest returns.  
There, Her fledglings wait for Her  
From Her sojournings, near and far.  
Deep-dark chambers, all three,  
In unison emit a frantic plea.  
Yellow beaks, thrice, gaping wide,  
Strenuously shove each other aside.  
Little starling, neck stretched out  
Begs with a feeble, urgent shout.*

*Her maternal instincts, love and care  
Sense the famished chick's cry of despair.  
A worm into its throat is thrust  
Yet, to feed it more She must.  
A hundred times to the air She takes  
To soar over grass and lakes.  
A hundred times She bears a meal  
Tearing up death's untimely seal.  
That done, and seeking brief rest  
She returns to Her loved ones in the nest.*

*Down She settles Her feathery form  
Radiating an unction soothingly warm  
That calms and sedates Her little three  
Within the nest in the towering tree  
Whose trunk sways to the whining overture  
Of the whistling wind in its seductive lure  
Of Mother bird into a hypnotic state  
To dutifully meet the whims of fate.  
Choreographing the motions, the gust,  
Caresses the tree with sensual lust.*

*Erected boughs too join in the dance  
Drawing Mother bird into a sweet trance.  
Relentless, Mother Nature hovers above  
Mother Starling's wings spread out in love  
Over Her young, dependent fruit  
Surrounded by forces which come to loot.  
Valiantly, She shrugs off sweet sleep  
Casting herself with an energetic leap  
Into the blowing, challenging breeze  
Travelling brusquely among the trees.*

*Her maternal chores She painfully pursues  
Refusing to Nature pay Her dues.  
Sadly, each day, Her tear-filled eyes  
Sense a change in Her offsprings' cries.  
Their feathers grown, developed, matured,  
By flight's thrill they are now lured.  
Their new-grown wings they seek to test  
To soar far above the family nest.  
With playful joy their wings they flap  
Preceding the flight from Mother's lap.*

*With mournful eyes Mother Starling awaits  
Her children's flight to their respective fates.  
Dearly She would wish to bind all three  
Eternally to Her love-nest in the tree.  
Vivid memories, however, of Her own past  
Remind Her that to fly off they must.  
She herself her birth-nest also left  
When at last Her wings were deft.  
She too had set off all alone  
To the manifold whims of Nature prone.*

*Alas, one sun-bathed, glorious morning,  
Little starling showing little warning  
Stretches its wings in the sun's rays  
As its debut into an adolescent phase.  
Into the warm air it readily dives  
Spurred on by deep, instinctive drives.*

*Its tiny heart throbs with great zest  
As it soars high above the family nest.  
And so, with each flapping movement  
It senses in its maiden flight an improvement.*

*High above, on a majestic oak  
A young falcon starts to croak  
At the sight of a succulent prey  
Blissfully travelling its very way.  
Its wings it shakes with virgin glee  
As it watches from the tall oak tree.  
For its Mother young falcon cries  
Beseeching Her to procure this prize.  
Its bellowing calls go quite neglected  
By its Mother who thinks it too protected.*

*To its own destiny it is now thrown,  
To cater for itself, all on its own.  
With each successive, frantic croak  
The young falcon dons the cloak  
Of the hunter it is cut out to be  
As it prepares to abandon the tree.  
To the air it takes in brisk flight  
Thrusting itself with surprising might.  
In its maiden flight it pursues a meal  
Carrying in its talons death's seal.*

*Far below, by the grassy ground  
Flutters little starling by a sandy mound  
Quite oblivious to the oncoming attack  
Swiftly looming behind its back.  
A dark shadow on its prey suddenly falls  
The tender meat young falcon mauls  
As its sharp talons and strong beak  
Give time for nought save one last shriek.  
The death of little starling is the payment due  
To Mother Nature which She swore to pursue.*