

# Relativity

*Ronald Wilcox*

While a hummingbird scans it for wires  
the red rosebud explodes in slow motion,  
the two velocities firing simultaneously.  
Riddled with inconsistencies, the rose is  
brushed in green air outside a screen door  
as if the hummingbird painted by numbers.  
Which square—there a moment ago—when  
the screen door slammed and Nancy walked  
back through the house forever—which  
square altered the very form of her?  
At what point did she converge with them?  
Her shadow's figure disappeared quickly  
down the hallway, the sound of her step  
on the wooden floor receding in echo,  
her laughter calling after, "Come on,  
it's time!" Oh, had I known in time,  
I would have stopped her with a word.  
The hummingbird, there, a moment after,  
or was it a moment before the slamming  
of the plain screen door, darted in  
from nowhere and hung in the frame  
of the screen on the air in my eye  
from where I sat that moment rocking.  
It brushed the air against the rosebush,  
burst in its little blur like a droplet  
of water on a watercolor painting . . .  
That was last spring. It's winter now.  
The rose is gone. Nancy's gone. I'm  
still here. Rocking. And the humming-  
bird's still there. Painting the air.

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