

## Faustina

Abandoning the garden she patrols,  
She trots down the brick path from the garage,  
And, flopping on the patio, curls and rolls  
From side to side, inviting a massage.  
We've quarreled over birds in recent days:  
For beauty's and flight's sake, I take their part,  
Whereas the interest that she displays  
In avian life is strictly à la carte.

She stretches on her back; I scratch her chest.  
My own back and left shoulder twinge and pinch  
From when I jammed them diving to arrest  
Her as she was absconding with a finch.  
(Hindquarters seized, she whirled on me and hissed;  
The bird shot free.) And now she cranes to draw  
Notice to areas I've sometimes missed  
Along her neck and underchin and jaw.

Should I exert myself on her behalf,  
Whose instinct is to pillage and pursue?  
She rises, wreathes her tail around my calf,  
Then stands with her two hind paws on my shoe.  
I've fed her, had her immunized and spayed,  
But she defeats me in our clash of wills,  
Darting off—little stray, rough renegade—  
While I regret the laws that she fulfills.