

**Richard Meyer**

**An Ever-Fixèd Mark**

a whisper knurled in gold  
the voice that spoke my name  
and drew me, drew me in

assurance in the tone,  
the lure of how it said  
*This time, This time, This time*

and hesitation fled  
where love's roulette stood poised  
attending me alone

giddy as the moon  
sanguine as a rose  
I wagered all I had

everything riding on red,  
bouncing and clicking  
against the spin of the wheel

and my heart danced  
like that little white ball, leapt  
and whirled with love's bright pebble

until it dropped  
with a clack  
in a black slot

stuck like a stone in mud,  
its blank white eye  
without pupil or iris

staring  
pitiless

Richard Mayer

## **A Grateful Witness**

This blue-skyed and blushing green April morning  
I sit on the back porch, sipping coffee, looking out at the yard.  
The newspaper, unread, lies on the tabletop.  
The troubles of the nation and the world must wait,  
rolled into a tube and bound with rubber bands,  
for now a flock of cedar waxwings glides in  
to feast among the branches of the crab apple tree.  
They gorge themselves on the winter dried fruit,  
wrinkled and deep red, the size of cranberries,  
and when the tree is a flurry of gray wings  
and sleek cinnamon bodies and yellow-tipped tails,  
just then, from across the high hedge,  
through the neighbor's kitchen window, I hear a radio  
begin to play the melody of "Simple Gifts"  
from Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*.  
A carnival of birds. That music in the air.  
And I, sitting in my sunlit chair,  
the grateful witness to this lovely, unexpected thing.