

Barbara Crooker

**Rufous-Sided Towhee**

*The teaching of Zen is: drink your tea.* —Jane Hirshfield, *Agni Online*

Which is what the towhee says as he  
scratches in the underbrush, searching for food.  
Black and white with rusty sides, he loves  
the understory, the margins, the hedgerows.  
He sinks into the afternoon like brown leaves  
steeping in hot water. He knows no ambition  
or envy, wants nothing beyond this spring day,  
sunlight spreading like honey on toast. Up pops  
my list, the items to check off, the errands to run,  
the weeds to pull. The towhee sings again:  
*Drink your tea.*