

DAVID WAGONER

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## In Youngs Creek

Red-winged blackbird, sitting on a stalk,  
What would you say if you could talk?

All three of us stood still  
Among tall fir trees. Two  
Had been wading slowly downstream  
In silence but for the rush  
Of shallow water. The third  
Had been crossing from bank to bank  
But had paused, one foreleg  
Lifted, one small black hoof  
Glistening in the sun.

None of us moved. Our eyes  
Looked out into other eyes,  
Trying to understand  
What we were and where  
All three were going to be  
In a moment, from that moment  
On and whether to trust  
What was holding us together,  
Whether to let the clear, cold  
Rippling water around us  
Be the one and only language.

Two of us, years later,  
Still stand there, still deciding  
Whether to move or whisper,  
While the third makes up its mind  
To trust creatures so strange,  
So near, then turns away  
As deliberately and slowly  
As before, crosses the streams  
Of water and light onto stones,  
Onto moss, and disappears.