

(currently untitled), by Jenn Wood (draft)

Driving a dust-clouded road one morning,
I stopped to watch a stilled turkey vulture,
Balanced on a withered, angled fence post,
Sunning itself in majestic silence.

Its sweeping wings spanned open--a scalloped cape,
Displaying feathers, layered brown and white.
Its garnet-stained head, featherless and stern,
Appeared grizzled and lined, a reddened peach pit,
Framing obsidian, stoic eyes.

I admired its clever bill, an inscrutable tool
For gleaning virtue from forgotten castoffs.
It stood, sure in its purpose,
A grand silhouette above a bowing field of bleached, wistful oat grass.

I waited for its wings to take the air,
To reach out and capture a thermal wind,
But it remained unwavering, and I moved on,
Still wondering why I found him so beautiful.