

ACTS OF SPRING

by Janet Ruth

Sky above the Río Grande,
above the Sandias,
stretches pale cerulean,
thin mares' tail clouds
gallop in from the west—
omens of change.
Cochiti Dam has paroled
imprisoned water
to make room for snowmelt.
The river runs bank-full.
Cottonwood and New Mexico olive leaves
clothe winter's bony fingers
in lacy green gloves.

Beneath this arc of change,
I stand among last year's rustling
dead leaves and fallen twigs,
strain to hear a whisper,
to see a sign.

Bubbling from the silence,
a saucy whistle, syncopation,
clattering *CHACK! CHACK!*
from a feathered sprite.
I twist and pry, peer and peek
through foliage—
nothing.

Completely still,
the chatter mocks me.
My eyes *in a fine frenzy rolling*, *
ready to give up,
I am at last rewarded with a glimpse—
Puck, in yellow and white robes,
launches on olive wings
into the heavens with a wink,
then plummets free,
back into the thicket—

yellow-breasted chat has returned.

* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 5, Scene 1

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