

It's Not Because I'm Beautiful

I don't always want to be passed by,
as if I'm nothing to you
or just too much to handle.

I don't want to be picked up
just because I'm beautiful,

I want someone to study me,
pick me apart
learn about me.

I want someone to challenge my abilities,
to see how long I'll last,
to see what moves I make.

I want someone that will stick with me
even through the rough times.

I want to be picked
not because I'm beautiful,
but because I'm rare.

- Kelly Heck

I came across a beautiful scarlet tanager one day, and in passing the color stunned me so that I went back to discover what precious entity I had found. It was so delicate, lying there under a window pane without a breath in its rigid body. Growing up with a bird enthusiast, I knew this little creature was rare, and the opportunity this had presented me was even more infrequent. I reveled in awe of my finding, and I couldn't help but take it in. I had to collect it, care for it, preserve it, and to do that I had to document it.

The vibrant red was so outstanding and unique, and it made this one little bird special. Around it were other birds that had found the same death, and I collected them as well – they would help me tell my story.

A green bird I couldn't identify, with its head eaten away by ants and other insects, was gruesome, but extraordinary! The contrasting blood stained spike with the green of the feathers fanned out and sparkled in the sunlight, like that of a white pine. To me it was as beautiful as the scarlet tanager, if not more.

The green bird, as well as others, radiated a certain individuality, and each illustrated their own strengths boldly, delicately, and beautifully. It isn't the type of beauty we are accustomed to though. These are the rarities we seek out in life, and as I've progressed through this series, I've learned more. There was no need to pick the obvious subjects, the beautiful and unblemished, because each subject I found illustrated their own rare qualities and should be appreciated for it.