

Waxwing

BY ROB COOK

The first time he hit her
she didn't see it coming.
He'd been drinking,
he was sorry.

She gave him another chance
and things were ok again.
Until the next time.
And the next.

And last night.

Looks in mirror
phones in sick
ice on face
warm cup of tea.

She rocks in the chair,
staring out the window
at the fall colors
in the crisp clear air.

And there they are:
cedar waxwings!
Her favorite birds are back,
feasting on firethorn berries,

bright red, overripe, fermenting,
intoxicating the birds.
She can't help but smile
as they stagger-fly around.

Smack!
One of the waxwings swerves
into the window in front of her,
lies stunned on the ground.

She rushes outside, picks it up
gently, cradles it in her arms,
protecting it until it comes to
its senses and can fly away.

She goes inside, cleans up
the spilt tea. She looks for the
waxwing but there's only the
imprint of wings on the glass
and her reflection in the pane.