

The Tridescence of Birds

Nobody blossoms alone.



If you were a boy named Henri Matisse who lived
in a dreary town in northern France where the skies were gray



And the days were cold
And you wanted color and light
And sun,



And your mother, to brighten your days,
Painted plates to hang on the walls



With pictures of meadows and trees,
Rivers
And birds,
And she let you mix the colors of paint—



Yellow and red,
Red and blue
Blue and yellow—



And let you arrange the fruit and flowers
She brought from the market—



Pears and oranges in a bowl
On a tablecloth,
And flowers in a blue vase—



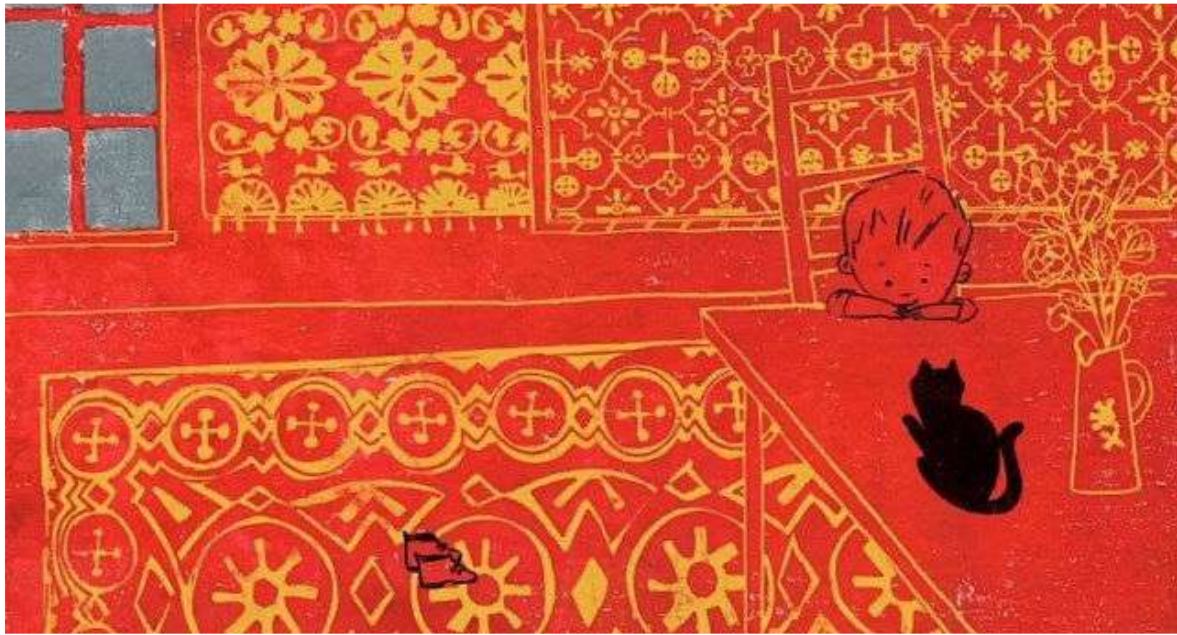
And in the town people wove silks
With colors



All tangled,
One color
Next to the other
Next to the other



And your mother put red rugs on the walls of the house



And on the dirt parlor floor
So all the world looked red,



And you raised pigeons
Watching their sharp eyes
And red feet,



And their colors that changed with the light
As they moved
That your mother called iridescence,



Would it be a surprise
That you grew up to be a fine painter
Who painted red rooms

And flowers that danced on green stems
And fruit in a bowl
On a blue and white tablecloth?



Would it be a surprise
That you became a fine painter who painted
Light
and
Movement





And the iridescence of birds?



Patricia MacLachlan, Hadley Hooper (ill.)
The Iridescence of Birds: A Book About Henri Matisse
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