

Must Not Be a Working Bird

by Jerry Ratch

I said, "That bird is hungry."
The sparrow was eyeing both of us
At our separate outside café tables
As it hopped around looking for crumbs.

Then it would look up at us
Expectantly. When she found some blessed
Small scrap of muffin, she would fly up
With it to her streetlight nest.

"Bird's hungry," I repeated
When the man eyed me, watching him
Like some kind of bird myself.
The man kept reading his paper, grim,

Grumpy, shaking his head.
"Must not be a working bird," he said.
Quite possibly, on the inside,
The human was already dead.

