

# Stunning

By Dawn Heinbach

An adjective overused  
for unworthy nouns:  
Technology, clothing,  
cars,  
physical human traits.

You have not witnessed  
stunning  
until you have seen  
a red fox frolicking,  
the sun's rays exposing  
glittering diamonds  
in the snow on his  
auburn coat.

A male cardinal  
on a bare winter's branch,  
his back a muted red —  
suddenly turns to face you,  
displaying the brilliance of his  
red breast.  
Stunning.

A bald eagle in flight —  
wings stretched  
eight feet across,  
head and tail exclamation points of white,  
divulging his species  
even from afar.  
Your heart aches  
as he soars  
unaware  
that his strength and beauty made him  
the patriotic symbol of an entire nation.  
Stunning.

A shimmering mountainside —  
tree branches enveloped  
in ice,  
reflecting first light  
climbing over the eastern horizon —  
demands that you stop  
and stare.

Stunning —  
whitetail buck,  
twelve points on solid arched bone,  
up and over his face.  
Neck bulging with  
testosterone-pumped muscles  
Wary  
Wise  
Able to clear a six-foot fence  
from a standstill,  
raised tail a white flag  
signaling danger.

There is no mistake.  
When Stunning is recognized,  
the body reacts.  
All previous monochromatic associations  
are replaced with  
a kaleidoscopic lens.