However, in the 'History of North American Birds,' (Vol. II) by Baird, Brewer and Ridgway, we read: "The Blue Jay is conspicuous as a musician. He exhibits a variety in his notes and occasionally a beauty and a harmony in his song for which few give him credit." Although I am quite confident that Mr. John Burroughs does not mention this Blue Jay song in his earlier books, in 'The Ways of Nature' he quotes from Mr. Leander Keyser "the sweet gurgling roulade of the wild jays"; and Wilson alludes to the Blue Jay's occasional warbling with all the softness of tone of a bluebird. Mr. Nehrling also speaks of the Blue Jay melody in his 'Birds of Song and Beauty,' and Mrs. Olive Thorne Miller says in writing about a pet Blue Jay, "and occasionally uttering a sweet though not loud song." A bird student in central Georgia claims to have heard this Blue Jay music very often, quite early in the morning.

Do the Blue Jay's crude efforts at mimicry indicate a craving for more power in the realm of sound and melody, and is Nature evolving an original song for him through desire, or are we becoming aware that a bird singer has been modestly hiding his talent throughout the centuries behind a camouflage of swagger airs and teasing screams, or at best poorly executed mocking notes and a few whistles? — ISABEL GOODHUE, *Washington, D. C.*

The Aesthetic Sense in Birds as illustrated by the Crow.— The Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos brachyrhynchos*) is not generally recognized as a songster, but it has one note which has always seemed to me to serve for a love-song since it is heard chiefly in the spring and is delivered in a different fashion from the various caws in the bird's repertoire. This is the hoarse rattle which is familiar to all of us. It is uttered with the bill pointed vertically downward and opened rather wide. It is accompanied by no marked movement of the head and whole body as when the caws are delivered, but the note seems to issue of itself, as it were, being very suggestive of eructation. There is, however, an accompanying display of wings opened slightly at the bend and shoulder feathers ruffled such as is common in the courtship of birds. This love-song doubtless serves its purpose in the reproductive cycle, and it is conceivable that it may give pleasure to the singer's mate and to the singer himself, but on the other hand it would be hard to prove that it was anything more than a mere reflex, the mechanical performance of an automaton devoid of even the rudiments of æsthetic sense.

The Crow has another vocal accomplishment, however, of a radically different character and of a much higher order, one which, it seems to me, can be accounted for only by postulating a well-developed æsthetic sense. There is no melody in his vocal utterances and, of course, no harmony, but in time rhythm, he is a master. The only other bird that occurs to me as conspicuous for rhythm with or without melody is the Barred Owl, and his four-footed line of blank verse with the curious cæsural pause in the middle is so unvarying that it may well be purely mechanical, whereas the Crow's is remarkable for its variety.

Every one has noticed how commonly the Crow caws in triplets — *caw, caw, caw.* Several years ago I found that a Crow near my house had a habit of giving four short caws in groups of two — *caw-caw, caw-caw* — and before long I discovered that other Crows in various localities many miles apart cawed in the same way. I came to call this, after the fashion of the fire-alarm, the 22 call. My attention being directed to this habit, I learned that this was by no means the only number in the Crows' fire-alarm system. My notes for August 19, 1915, read as follows: "Heard a Crow near the house this morning that cawed the number 21 (*caw caw* (rest) *caw*) a large number of times in succession — perhaps twenty or twenty-five times. The caws were short. This was followed by five short caws delivered two or three times, then two or three groups of three long caws, two or three groups of four long caws, and the 22 call delivered a few times. (I am not sure that I remember these various calls in the exact order.)" And for October 22, 1916: "A Crow near our house this morning gave over and over again many times a group of caws like the number 211 on the fire-alarm, occupying two or three seconds. The time was so regular that I could detect no variation. The length of the several notes was uniform, I think, and so were the pitch and the quality, the rhythm being all that differentiated the phrase from other performances of the Crow." And for March 14, 1917: "A Crow this morning cawed 211 several times very rapidly; i. e., each phrase was rapidly delivered."

Now, intelligent as the Crow is reputed to be, I do not believe that he has invented a Morse code of signals to convey information to his companions. Nor, on the other hand, does it seem reasonable to suppose that these performances are purely mechanical and involuntary. How can we escape the belief that the bird takes a delight, not only in the exercise of his vocal organs but also in the rhythm and the variety of his utterances? Is he not, in a limited way, a true artist, a composer as well as a performer? I ask it in all seriousness.

I have long believed with Mr. Henry Oldys that birds take an æsthetic pleasure in their own songs, and the case of the Crow seems to support this view so strongly that I have ventured to call attention to it. In support of the mechanistic view of bird-song the case of birds with cracked voices and similar imperfections has been cited. It is pointed out that such birds sing as vociferously as the good singers of their respective species, and it is argued that if they possessed any æsthetic sense shame would keep them silent. This argument would carry more weight with me if I had not heard so many shameless human singers, whistlers, and cornetists whose performances gave pleasure only to themselves and positive pain to most of their hearers! — FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury, Mass.*

Magpie (*Pica pica hudsonia*) in Northeastern Illinois.— The only actual capture of a Black-billed Magpie in Illinois that has come to my